Why the Pact Was Signed

NEW MASSES

FIFTEEN CENTS
September 5, 1939

A Guide to the Crisis

The Case of the Stupid Statesmen
A Cable by Theodore Draper

The Liberals and the USSR
by Alter Brody

Inside Poland
by John Stark

What Every Appeaser Should Know
by Richard H. Rovere

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Between Ourselves

THE weekly foreign cable by Richard Goodman, all-important this week because it deals with French reaction to the German-Soviet Pact, has been refused transmission from Paris, following the rigid Daladier censorship decree. Our cable office told NM twenty-four hours after Mr. Goodman normally filed that "The French government advises all messages to or from France must be written in plain language. Any language recommended by the Convention may be used. Code and cipher are prohibited. All messages are subject to delay. Government messages may go forward in code or cipher as usual. All messages subject to sender's risk." Mr. Goodman's cables have never been written in code or cipher but in the condensed wordage universally used by reporters and easily readable to anyone familiar with the few telescoped prefixes employed. Such messages are in no sense code or cipher. P. J. Philip's New York *Times* dispatches have come through on schedule.

The monumental duplicity of the commercial press never exceeded its present job and NM will expose this in detail next week in an article by Joseph North. Shameful to the nth degree was the role of the New York *Post* and the New York *World-Telegram*. Ludwig Lore outdid himself, not only sputtering distortions and phony explanations, but printing outright lies, such as his comments on Gabriel Peri and the French Communist Party. See next week's issue.

The morning after the Armstrong-Ambers fight and the Russo-German Pact, Dorothy Dunbar Bromley, ostrich editor of the New York *Post*, evinced the wish that she might have looked in at the breakfast table of NM's editors. Speaking for those of us who eat breakfast, we confess we were covered with confusion. We had our Moscow gold on Armstrong.

The distinguished sports writer, Hugh Bradley, formerly of the New York *Post*, will become a regular contributor to NM in a near issue with a piece on Jim Crow in organized baseball.

One of the first responses we have had to our editorial last week on the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact comes from a reader who signs himself "A student of politics who has renewed courage and confidence in the theories of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin." He says: "My extreme joy at reading your editorial on 'The USSR and Germany,' on page 19 of your August 29 issue, caused me to let out a whoop of delight. Trying to estimate when the editorial could have been written, I judged that it was not later than Tuesday afternoon or evening. Your profound analysis of the situation as early as Tuesday only serves to confirm the correctness of the Marxist-Leninist interpretation of world affairs. At times I have been quite dejected at continually being blasphemed as an 'incompetent radical,' but the satisfaction I have received from reading your page 19 this week is sufficient to knock the bottom out of any slight discouragement."

This autumn Granville Hicks will present a lecture course for NM's Institute of Opinion at the Hotel Diplomat, 108 West 43rd St., N. Y. C., formerly the Hotel Center. His subject will be *Marx and Engels—Two Men Who Saw the Future*, covered in five Thursday night lectures, October 15 and 29, November 12 and 26, and December 10. Admission for a single lecture will be $1.50, for the series of five, $5. Subscriptions for the course and its prospectus and bibliography may now be obtained by writing the NM Institute of Opinion, 461 Fourth Avenue, N. Y. C.

Editor Joseph North has been commandeered for a return engagement at Camp Unity, where he will speak on the Russo-German Non-Aggression Pact, on Labor Day weekend. Joseph Starobin, writer and specialist on foreign affairs, will untangle the diplomatic moves of the past two weeks for Camp Beacon's audience, also on Labor Day weekend.

From Washington, D. C., comes one of the many enthusiastic comments we have received on Joseph North's "A Year Went By," published in the August 15 issue:

"A newspaperman and a socialist who has read NEW MASSES for many years with a critical if not a jaundiced eye wishes to compliment Joe North on a superlative piece of writing, 'A Year Went By.' Many of us, perhaps, have such honest penetrating emotions as those we can feel in North as he recalls those three men (who will live on in us because of that writing) but few of us, even those of us whose work is putting words on paper, could express the feelings of admiration and love and unity as effectively as he has. Simple, strong, heartfelt—it was one of those things a man writes only two or three times in a lifetime."

Who's Who

ALTER BRODY has contributed to NM, the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, and other progressive periodicals. He is the author of a one-act play, *Lamentations*, and a volume of poetry, *A Family Album*. . . . Edward Wall, a Los Angeles newspaperman, is at work on a book based on the life of Joe Hill. He did publicity for Governor Olson of California during the election campaign last fall. . . . William Allan is legislative secretary of the Communist Party of Michigan. . . . Muriel Rukeyser is the author of *U.S.1*, a volume of poetry. . . . Norman Rosten's poetry has been broadcast over a coast-to-coast network. . . . John Stark, whose "Inside Poland" assembles the reasons for that country's firm stand, is a specialist in political bibliography.

Phil Stern

Granville Hicks

Associated with NM since 1932, when it was still a monthly, Hicks has been a regular contributor and sometime editor throughout the magazine's existence as a weekly. In that period, he has written three books, edited two volumes of letters, taught at two colleges, lectured widely, and worked at other activities as diverse as radio news commentator and publisher's reader. His books are "The Great Tradition," "John Reed," and "I Like America." As a teacher he has twice been the storm center of academic disputes, when Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute fired him in 1934 and when Harvard hired him in 1938. He lives on a farm in Grafton, N. Y., with his wife and daughter and his mother and father. He has recently completed a book on English literature, "Figures of Transition," which Macmillan will issue in the fall. Beginning with this issue he will write a Review and Comment article for NM every other week. This fall he will deliver five lectures under NM's auspices.

This Week

NEW MASSES, VOL. XXXII, No. 11

September 5, 1939

The Case of the Stupid Statesmen *by Theodore Draper* . 3
What Every Appeaser Should Know *by Richard H. Rovere* 5
Inside Poland *by John Stark* 7
Gropper's Cartoon 9
Why the Pact Was Signed *An Editorial Article* . . . 10
The Liberals and the Pact *by Alter Brody* 13
On the Pact 14
Auto City Mayor *by William Allan* 15
Thanks Be to My Uncle Miah *A Short Story by Edward Wall* 16
For Fun *A Poem by Muriel Rukeyser* 17
ILA on the Mississippi *by Cole Stevens* 19
Editorial Comment 21
Readers' Forum 23

REVIEW AND COMMENT

Three Novels *by Granville Hicks* 24
Miss Dean's Dilemma *by Joseph Starobin* 25
Radio Drama *by S. S.* 26
Literature of Freedom *by S. S.* 26
Alvin Foote's Poems *by Norman Rosten* 27
First Novel *by R. H. R.* 28
Book Notes 28

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Plays into Movies *by James Dugan* 29
Art work by Mischa Richter, Gardner Rea, Darryl Frederick, Crockett Johnson.

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NEW MASSES

VOLUME XXXII SEPTEMBER 5, 1939 NUMBER 11

The Case of the Stupid Statesmen

"For want of a pact, a kingdom may be lost," rephrases the Churchill clan. Chamberlain and his Munichmen take the blame from all sides in London.

London (By Cable).

THE impact of the German-Soviet Pact in England varies with groups and classes. To the tories it has been a terrific kick in the stomach. It is almost a pleasure these days to read the London *Times* for its utter dismay over well laid plans in ruins. To liberal intellectuals and labor politicians it has come as "the most astounding and shocking reversal in history," to quote the *Daily Herald*. The shakeup for the present among intellectuals is especially acute. As for the average worker, to judge from what I have heard, the attitude of many is "It serves them bloody well right for thinking that the Russians would be their whipping boys."

To get these reactions straight, understand this: The Chamberlain tories negotiated with the Soviets in order to reach a favorable deal with Germany. That aim has never varied, though the methods of achievement have. Months of hopeless bargaining convinced Soviet leaders that a serious agreement with Chamberlain was out of the question. The military negotiations were the last straw. The Churchillian tories, on the other hand, wanted some agreement with the Soviets, because they have made up their minds Germany must be fought and that eleven million Soviet soldiers would compensate for Britain's chief weakness. The British bourgeoisie have never won their wars with their own hands. Both these tory hopes have now been punctured. Chamberlain knows the Soviets will not be used as a bogy; Churchill knows that the British empire will stand or fall on its own wobbly feet. The immediate effect has been most salutary—for right until the pact, appeasement feelers still pervaded the tory press. For example, as late as August 17 the *Times* editorially proposed that the position of Forster, Hitler's stooge in Danzig, should be "regularized." After the pact no tory paper dared suggest anything but firmness. The *Times* suddenly spoke of consequences if "the rules of law and liberty and justice" are "anywhere infringed." . . . Note that "anywhere."

Then, on the face of it, the pact has temporarily shattered the appeasement front. The basic reason is that England and France, left alone, face Germany and Italy and cannot afford to give way much more without risking utter ruin. Before the pact these powers had much more room to maneuver. The debate in Commons was mainly

Mischa Richter

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significant for Chamberlain's caution and Churchill's silence. Lloyd George, also silent, told the Manchester *Guardian* in a statement not quoted elsewhere that the government's "handling of the Russian situation was provocative and incredibly foolish." He added, "The whole story is a revelation of almost criminal incompetence." An equally strong indication that the British ruling class is at long last forced to reckon with realities is Sir Archibald Sinclair's statement that the pact's "clear implication was that it was to the British empire rather than to Russia that in the future Herr Hitler would look for his territorial living space." If so, the British people may find ways to remedy its government's provocative and incredible foolishness, perhaps even almost criminal incompetence.

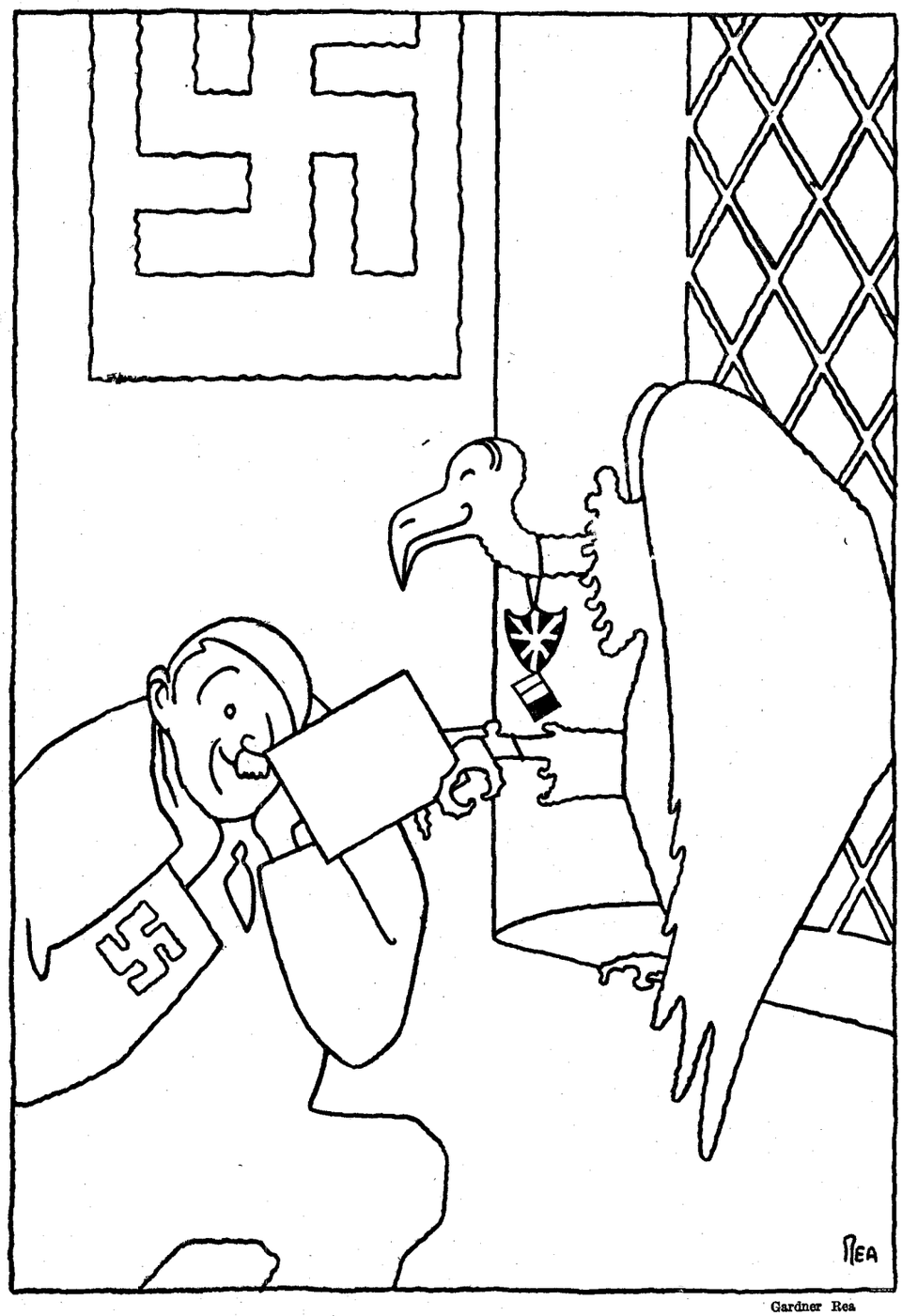
[Alfred Duff Cooper, former British first lord of the admiralty, also blamed the Chamberlain policy for failing to complete negotiations with the Soviet Union. Writing in the New York *Herald Tribune* of August 26, he said: "The British prime minister cannot be described as a fortunate fisherman. Every time he goes to the river it is the largest fish that gets away. When he went fishing at Easter he lost Albania. This time he has allowed Russia to get off the hook."—ED.]

The tories know they have been punched in the teeth. They do not like it, but they are doing some hard thinking and harder conniving. It has been left to the *Daily Herald,* the Manchester *Guardian, Reynolds News,* and the like to carry out a frontal attack against the Soviets. Excepting the incorruptible Ellen Wilkinson and Aneuran Bevan every Labor speaker in Commons exceeded the tories in abuse. Under the cry "Soviet doublecross," Labor leaders have practically entered the Chamberlain camp. Labor having thrown away the golden opportunity to pin responsibility on the government's fifth column for Britain's present peril, to their delight the tories are finding it possible to use Labor leaders for the dirtiest job, since they do not come into court with exactly clean hands. "Not all the MacDonalds have been cleared out by a long shot," was the bitter comment of Harry Pollitt, general secretary of the Communist Party. In the event of war these latterday MacDonalds are likely to enter the Cabinet at the very start. More pertinent, they are supplying an excellent pretext for another Munich. As long as the reformists concentrate their fire against the Soviets Chamberlain is encouraged to attempt another deal with Hitler.

I heard Harry Pollitt state the Communist position on the pact. Previously I had had a long off-the-record talk with the Communist leader. He made no effort to minimize the difficulties with the intellectuals, incapable of ridding themselves of their illusions without a painful Hamlet-like period of indecision, but he thought the phase would be of short duration as during similar periods in the past. He especially pointed to Brest-Litovsk and the Franco-Soviet Pact. In his speech Pollitt courageously and directly answered the question of what the Communist Party would do in the event of war. If Britain should fight with no open or secret imperialist aims or intentions the party would take its place in the common front. But—and this is crucial: "The Communist Party openly declares that it is not possible to do it with any guarantee of success so long as the Chamberlain government is in power." Whether in peace or war, Chamberlain must go, Pollitt said. "For you cannot fight if you yourselves are going to be placed in chains."

The Communist Party of Britain, mindful of the fate of *Humanite* and the further dangers of its French comrades, is determined to fight Chamberlain at home and Hitler abroad with redoubled force. There is no non-aggression pact between Communism and fascism. There is no non-aggression pact between Communism and capitalism, no matter what variety. For five years the Soviet Union and the Communist movement have tried to induce the Western powers to join an anti-aggression front. No means have been neglected, no concession has been too great for the higher end. Instead the Western powers not only betrayed peace and the smaller nations which trusted them, but sought to overcome their own dangerous vulnerability at the Soviets' expense. The time has come to add up some accounts and settle others. In Britain, where the Chamberlain ring is better known than elsewhere, the Communist movement is recognizing hard realities in order to change them.

THEODORE DRAPER.



Gardner Rea

Carte Blanche

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What Every Appeaser Should Know

Everyman's guide to Soviet foreign policy. How the USSR negotiates for peace. The difference between socialist and capitalist states.

THE Soviet Union is a country of federated socialist republics. Based as it is upon the historical findings of Karl Marx, its people and their leaders make every decision upon their understanding of society as an ever changing array of human and material forces. Each principle is considered in the context of surrounding circumstances, each circumstance in its bearing on socialist principle.

In the realm of international relations the Soviet Union has always had before it two perspectives which, according to its lights, are as one. The Soviet Union wants peace throughout the world, because its firmest desire is that all the peoples remain free to march toward democracy and to its fullest extension, socialism. It wants peace in order that it may itself be free to devote its energies to the development of its own economic and cultural life. The Soviet Union needs neither war nor imperialism. It wants neither.

NOT PACIFIST—NOT AGGRESSIVE

But the Soviet Union has never been pacifist, nor has it ever been tolerant of aggression. It has faced a dozen world situations, and it has reserved the right to examine each as it arises, each as it bears upon the others. In so doing the Soviet Union has never failed to analyze every combination of international forces, every war and every rumor of war, with a perspicacity which came to the peoples of the world sooner or later. Before, during, and immediately after the World War, the Bolsheviks saw it for what the rest of the world, *ex post facto,* admitted it to be. The Bolsheviks realized that the Allies and the Central powers were only rival imperialists, that neither represented the struggle for freedom any more than one represented an imperialism less despicable than the other. Lenin and the Bolshevik leaders called upon the soldiers of all countries to lay down their arms and fraternize with one another. In those countries where socialism was strong among the working people—Russia, Germany, Austria, Hungary—the Communists called upon the people to make the governments their own. In Russia alone was there the strength and consciousness for this. In 1917 Russia concluded a separate peace with Germany, and her soldiers returned for the building of socialism.

Once in power the Bolsheviks were faced with forming a national foreign policy. The governments that had been enemies on the battlefields of France were united in their desire to stop at all costs the progress of the Russian people. Allies and Central powers alike sent armies of intervention to aid the White Guards. The unity of the Russian people in defense of their new government frustrated, after years of warfare across the top of Europe, the efforts of the imperialists to return Russia to its czarist rulers.

AFTER THE WAR

In the years after the World War the Soviet Union saw little change in the attitude of the hostile capitalist countries surrounding it, and indeed there was little. Determined to build socialism where the people wanted it, the Bolsheviks built a mighty economy and a mighty army. The interventionists and counter-revolutionists thwarted, Russia was able to return to international politics as a force to be treated with some respect. With parity and with regard for her own people, she dealt with other nations. The Soviet Union was at Rapallo in 1922, and then and subsequently she made trade and non-aggression pacts with Italy, Germany, and other powers.

In 1933, when the Nazis destroyed the German democracy, the Soviets and the Communists throughout the world were the first to see the complete implications of what had happened. In the fascism of Germany they saw many times increased the threat to the world peace that was already so tenuous. A new situation, a new force in the world of dying capitalism—and the Soviet Union among all nations was the first to see that a more intensive effort to achieve collective security was needed.

In 1934 the USSR joined the League of Nations. It joined, said Joseph Stalin, "considering that, despite its weaknesses, the League might nevertheless serve as a place where aggressors can be exposed and as a certain instrument of peace, however feeble, that might hinder the outbreak of war." The Soviet Union at once became the League's most militant supporter of collective security as it is set forth in Article XVI of the League Covenant and the strongest critic of the failure to put the provision to work. People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Maxim Litvinov became the outstanding spokesman in Geneva for the maintenance of existing treaties and the halting of aggression.

EFFORTS TO CHECK FASCISM

In 1935 the Soviet Union concluded an agreement of mutual assistance with France. Mutual assistance or non-aggression pacts were soon signed with Czechoslovakia, the Mongolian People's Republic, the Chinese Republic. In all its dealings with other countries, in all its League of Nations participation, the Soviet Union stressed the urgency of adopting immediate steps toward the halting of fascism. From 1935, when Italy sent her legions into Ethiopia, through every other fascist advance—Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Memel, Albania, Danzig—the Soviet Union pleaded for economic and military sanctions, as provided in League doctrine. The Soviet Union was not heeded by Europe's chancelleries. In each crisis it has been ready to act. Other governments preferred not to notice what was going on.

The most recent decision of the Soviet government, the signing of the trade and non-aggression pacts with Germany, is declared, by those with whom consistency is less than a commanding virtue, to be inconsistent with the previous foreign policy of the Soviet Union. Like every step in its development, like the joining of the League and the signing of all its other pacts, this decision is said to be a reversal that negates its past services to peace, each of which was once called a betrayal.

That the signing of the pact with Germany is a further step within the framework of Soviet foreign policy, and in that sense new, is not to be denied—any more than when the USSR joined the League. That it is a step inconsistent with its past is a charge that does little more than demonstrate the inattentiveness, to say the least, of those who make it. Any study of Soviet foreign policy, even over the past few years, will present an outline of the Soviet attitude toward relations with the fascist nations.

THE PRESS—"HURT SURPRISE"

The world capitalist press and most of its pundits have expressed a hurt surprise at the pact. Saying at first that the pact was hatched in the days immediately preceding its announcement, they later were obliged to revert to a speech of Stalin's at the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in March of this year, at which Stalin said that his country stood for a "policy of peace and of strengthening business relations with all countries." From this the press, overwhelmed by its own sagacity, infers that ever since March and during the period of negotiations with Britain and France, Stalin has been toying with the idea of commercial and non-aggressive pacts with Germany.

But if Stalin and other Soviet officials have been "playing" with such an idea even during these negotiations, it entered their minds a good deal earlier. Indeed, it was a consideration at a time when Soviet foreign policy was the thing over which the capitalist press now mourns. For in 1934 Stalin used almost exactly the same words. "Our foreign policy is clear," he said. "It is a policy of preserving peace and strengthening commercial relations with all countries. . . . Those who are striving for business intercourse with us will always receive our support." In the next sentence

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Stalin delivered the famous dictum that the Soviet Union would teach aggressors "not to poke their pig's snout into our Soviet garden."

On Sept. 28, 1936, and Sept. 21, 1937, Maxim Litvinov made the following statements at the seventeenth and eighteenth plenary sessions of the League of Nations:

We by no means object to attempts at an agreement even with the most aggressive countries. On the contrary we consider it necessary to invite them to take part in every international step. But we are against their dictating the terms of the negotiations or paying them premiums for being so kind as to negotiate. [Sept. 28, 1936.]

But we know the example of one Communist state, rich in minerals and other raw materials, which has not refused to export these minerals and raw materials to other countries, to trade with them on a very wide scale whatever the regime ruling in these countries, including even the fascist and National Socialist regimes. [September 21, 1937.]

And V. M. Molotov, Litvinov's successor, made as thorough an announcement as the capitalist press could ask:

While conducting negotiations with Great Britain and France, we by no means consider it necessary to renounce business relations with countries like Germany and Italy. At the beginning of last year, on the initiative of the German government, negotiations were started for a trade agreement and new credits. Germany offered to grant us a new credit of 200,000,000 marks. As at that time we did not reach unanimity on the terms of this new economic agreement, the matter was dropped. At the end of 1938 the German government again proposed economic negotiations and a credit of 200,000,000 marks, the German side expressing readiness to make a number of concessions. At the beginning of 1939 the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade was informed that a special German representative, Herr Schnure, was leaving for Moscow for the purpose of these negotiations. Subsequently, the negotiations were entrusted to Herr Schulenburg, the German ambassador in Moscow, instead of Herr Schnure, but they were discontinued on account of disagreement. To judge by certain signs, it is not precluded that the negotiations may be resumed. [May 31, 1939.]

What held back the glycerine tears when that statement was made? Surely the British and French negotiators were sufficiently *en garde* to follow the public statements of the man with whom they were dealing.

If Mr. Chamberlain checks that quotation with the June 1939 issue of the *Communist International,* he will surely not feel that it was hindsight on *Pravda's* part when it wrote last week:

Actually the present negotiations with Germany were initiated before the British and French made any suggestion to send a military mission to Moscow and, incidentally, were preceded by Mr. Hudson's proposals of a British loan to Germany, an effort to make an arrangement with Germany that did not meet the success of our own negotiations. Since the British government and its press at the time described these as an endeavor to promote world peace, we expect our similar but more successful efforts to be similarly characterized. [Quoted by G. E. R. Gedye in the New York *Times* for August 22, Page 8.]

And the British Foreign Office might have checked with its copy of the Franco-Russian Mutual Assistance Treaty. In the protocol of the signing of the treaty:

The two governments place on record the fact that the negotiations which have resulted in the signing of the present treaty were originally undertaken with a view to supplementing a security agreement embracing the countries of northeastern Europe, namely, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, *Germany,* Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Baltic states which are neighbors of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; in addition to that agreement, there was to have been concluded a treaty of assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, France, and *Germany,* by which each of those three states was to have undertaken to come to the assistance of any one of them which might be the object of aggression on the part of any other of those three states.

The italics are mine. The pact was signed in 1935. The Soviet antipathy to Nazism had long since been made clear.

The answer to whatever seeming contradictions there may be in seeking peace and business relations even with the fascists is not unknown to those who emphasize them most. The Soviet policy on trade relations is as much a part of its socialist policy as is the collectivization of the land. Returning to the philosophy of socialism, one finds that its very base is a realization that action must always be collective, that playing the lone hand is playing the enemy's game, that men to move forward must move together. Repeatedly, in the League of Nations and in its proclamations to the world, the Soviet Union has announced its readiness to join in *collective* plans for the maintenance of peace—disarmament, collective security, trade sanctions, refugee distribution. It will take the lead in any of these, provided it is assured that it acts in concert with others. The firmness with which it has been ready to initiate proceedings is shown again by Maxim Litvinov in a League statement:

The talk of abolishing or toning down Article XVI has, of course, been engendered by an ebb of confidence in collective security and international solidarity and by fear of rampant aggression. This rampant aggression, I think, must act partly in another direction, too. It is beginning to remind of threatening dangers to states which a few years ago could have been considered quite sequestered and secure against them. Rampant aggression spreading over all continents is confronting all states, large and small, with this danger. Political and military autarchy, with all its burdensome increase in home armaments, is not the only, or, in any case, is not the most reliable, method of safeguarding individual security. The collective character of the committed aggression must inevitably impel the states toward collective security. Collective security is Article XVI, and we must preserve it, and, when it is possible, make it stronger. [Feb. 1, 1938.]

Did Britain have no forewarning of the watchfulness of the Soviets during the negotiations? Was the lion lamb-like in its dealings with the USSR? Six months ago D. S. Manuilsky, secretary of the Communist International, said:

As long ago as 1927, in an article entitled "Notes on Contemporary Themes," Comrade Stalin said:

"British capitalism always was, is, and will be the most vicious strangler of popular revolutions. Ever since the great French Revolution of the end of the eighteenth century, down to the Chinese revolution that is now in progress, the British bourgeoisie has always stood in the front ranks of the butchers of the liberation movement of mankind . . . But the British bourgeoisie does not like to fight with its own hands. It has always preferred to wage war through others."

But the British reactionary bourgeoisie are digging their own graves with their predatory plans. By secretly supporting Japanese aggression in China, they are paving the way for the ousting of Britain from the Far East; by their concessions to Italian fascism, they are paving the way for the loss of Britain's position in the Mediterranean; by granting loans to the fascist aggressors, they are augmenting the latter's military might and the chances of their own defeat. By strengthening German fascism, they are paving the way for the partition of their own empire. By their *plans of attack on the USSR,* they are paving the way for the collapse not only of fascism, but of the entire capitalist system.

The Soviet peace policy has not changed. Neither has fascism nor those who advance it by appeasement. The Soviet Union refuses, and always will, to play the fascist game, but it is no more eager to play Chamberlain's, which would have the fascists fatten on a few democracies until it is ready to take on the Soviet Union in a war which, by the torv calculation, would destroy both. Again in March, Stalin said:

The hullabaloo raised by the British, French, and American press over the Soviet Ukraine is characteristic. The gentlemen of the press there shouted until they were hoarse that the Germans were marching on the Soviet Ukraine, that they had what is called the Carpathian Ukraine, with a population of some 700,000, and that not later than this spring the Germans would annex the Soviet Ukraine, which has a population of more than thirty million, to this so-called Carpatho-Ukraine. It looks as if the object of this suspicious hullabaloo was to incense the Soviet Union against Germany, to poison the atmosphere, and provoke a conflict with Germany without any visible grounds.

And Stalin knew the men with whom he was dealing:

Far be it from me to moralize on the policy of non-intervention, to talk of treason, treachery, and so on. It would be naive to preach morals to people who recognize no human morality. Politics is politics, as the old case-hardened bourgeois diplomats say. It must be remarked, however, that the big and dangerous political game started by the supporters of the policy of non-intervention may end in a serious fiasco.

The record is there for any man to see. Those who feign surprise or charge betrayal did not care to see. But for the rest, who love and want peace, the Soviet Union remains what it has always been. With the peoples of the world it will fight fascism—but without appeasers.

RICHARD H. ROVERE.

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Inside Poland

The political setup that has enabled the Polish people to withstand the threats of fascism without having much democracy themselves. The simple threat of national extinction.

A Polish policeman arrested a peasant and charged him with spreading alarming rumors damaging the state's security. When asked what the peasant had said, the policeman replied: "He was saying that there would be no war against the Nazis." (Current Polish crisis joke.)

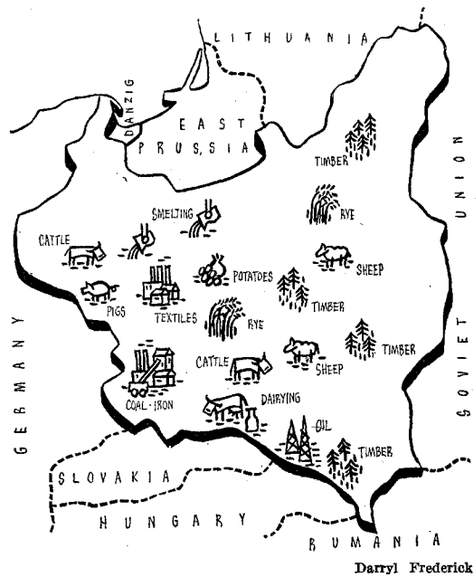
IN ALL the hullabaloo about the possibilities of a second Munich with Poland as the goat, few observers seem to have considered the internal Polish scene. National, more than class, unity has helped to upset Daladier's and Chamberlain's shell game. The refusal of the Soviets to shill for the Munichmen and plump for an end to Hitler's murderous gambling is appreciated by the Polish folk. They know that their eastern border is the safest in the world, since it is faced by the USSR. They have a new non-aggression pact with the Soviets, less than a year old. Unlike England, France, the United States, or dismembered Czechoslovakia, there is at present no group or faction in Poland which would dare raise its voice for any kind of submissive deal with Hitler. If there are any Hoovers, Bonnets, Halifaxes, or Henleins hiding in the rye fields, they know better than to whisper that most unpopular word "appeasement." Even the finagling Beck, a sellout artist of the old school, has been hard put to find a way to betray. But there may be no stopping such fellows if the enemy raises the ante much above the usual 30 pieces of silver.

HITLER'S STOOGE

The nearest thing to an umbrella carrier or *Oberlandesgruppeleiter* in the national scene is Wlazyslaw Studnicki, the usual former Socialist turned Nationalist, who has been trying to convince the Polish people that Nazi imperialism is their best friend. During the World War, Studnicki acted as a stool-pigeon for the German occupation along with his followers called "Activists." Beaten by Pilsudski and his legions (who aimed for Polish independence) and the anti-German National Democrats, this traitor has now been served properly by his master, Hitler. Right now in Poland it is not good politics to advance a program calling for total annihilation of one's country. Even Chamberlain couldn't do that in Poland, now.

Although the determination of every class from noble to proletarian to call Hitler's bluff is making headlines, the sharp internal differences between classes is intense. The Polish ruling class, despite its best endeavors, has never been able to obliterate either the labor movement or the peasant movement.

Under a national labor policy that could teach our own National Manufacturers Association a few tricks, the Polish workers have come up with a record of more militant and more frequent strikes than in any other country of the capitalist world. Tom Girdler will be glad to know that the sitdown strike is a Polish workers' inspiration for which they won legal recognition in the courts. The vast majority of industrial and farming workers have found that the unions make them strong; so strong that labor pogroms have not been able to dent them. Even the peasants have adopted the strike method to obtain economic and political relief. Their "market strikes" and produce blockades have at times flared to the intensity of a civil war. Associated Farmers, Inc., please note.



Darryl Frederick

POLAND STANDS. *Hedged on two sides by Hitler steel helmets, Poland sees in Danzig and the Corridor the threat to her national existence.*

THE MINORITIES

On top of these basic class struggles within the country are imposed the struggles of the national minorities; 4,500,000 Ukrainians and Ruthenians, 2,600,000 Jews, one million White Russians, and 750,000 Germans. Here is one-third of a nation, legally equal under the constitution, but like our own underprivileged, most sorely oppressed. Still they harbor no separatist movements, except those agitation campaigns put on by the paid agents of Hitler. What they want is more democracy within their country; not a new and even more reactionary rule by the Nazis. They know what they have (which isn't so good) and they know what they would get (which would be worse).

The Polish government has been trying to monopolize politics for some time now. It has officially banned all political parties except its own "Camp of National Unity." Though banned, the opposition's parties have not been liquidated, except the Communist Party, which was outlawed at the very inception of the new Polish state. Savage terrorism, torture, and long term imprisonment have driven it underground. This is most unfortunate at the present crisis, since the spirit of unity which permeates the whole nation now has no means of quick organizational crystallization.

To understand the present-day setup and the political forces in Poland it is necessary to go back to the post-war birth of the new Polish state. Before the World War, the Polish bourgeoisie in the main part of Poland which had been annexed by the czarist Russian empire never gave a thought to national independence. They took their place in the developing Russian empire and reaped the profits from expanding Polish industry. The Polish working class was naturally part and parcel of the Russian revolutionary movement —seeing it, correctly, as the permanent solution of the Poles' national and economic emancipation.

PILSUDSKI'S START

Only a small group of intellectuals, grouped about the late Marshal Pilsudski, planned to fabricate the Polish bourgeois state. This group within the Polish Socialist Party tried to win over the workers to their program. Their nationalistic opportunism was left high and dry in 1905 when the workers joined hands with the Russian revolutionaries. Left as a small minority within the now split Polish Socialist Party, Pilsudski and his followers became secret agents for the Austrian General Staff in its plotting of war against czarist Russia. The Polish bourgeoisie for the most part stuck by the czar during the following World War. Pilsudski and his legions, therefore, became the only bearers of the slogan, "Poland, free, independent, and capitalistic."

After the proletarian revolution in Russia had smashed the czarist regime and brought about the downfall of the Austrian and German empires with the ending of the war, Pilsudski's legions became the masters of their country. There was left little or no organized working class in Poland after the war and revolution. The retreating czarist army forcibly evacuated whatever workers it could find in Polish territory. The invading Germans took off the rest to dig its trenches and caused total unemployment by dismantling the Polish factories in its path. The more militant Polish workers had already joined the revolutionary forces of Communism.

Thus weakened and declassed, the Polish workers were unable to emulate their Russian

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brothers and take the state power into their own hands. Then the reformist Socialists went over to Pilsudski, giving him his first ministers and blessing his bourgeois dictatorship with the title of "Workers and Peasants Government." At this time Pilsudski was planning the first fascist dictatorship.

Looking for a class base for such a dictatorship, Pilsudski was rebuffed by the bourgeois Poles and their National Democratic Party who feared his radical past. So he went east and found his backers (as did Hitler among the Junkers and Mussolini among the *latifundians*) among the big landowners of eastern Poland who were mostly Ukrainians and White Russians. To get their alliance Pilsudski waged his war on the Soviets. Then the French imperialists came to his aid, hoping to overthrow the Soviet government and collect on the czarist debts. When he started an offensive on Kiev, Petlura, the Ukrainian adventurer, joined forces with him. All these were repelled by the counter-offensive of the Red Army which was stopped only at the gates of Warsaw. After the Riga Peace Treaty Pilsudski's Poland emerged as an ally of the French imperialist government. The Weimar Republic was no menace.

DALADIER LETS DOWN

After Hitler's coup d'etat, however, Pilsudski saw the danger of a reborn German imperialism and its consequences to Polish independence. He tried to induce Daladier to wage a preventive war against Hitler, not knowing that Daladier was already a stooge for the British imperialists whose Munich policies were already in the making.

Deserted by his "protector," Pilsudski was forced to conclude a non-aggression pact with Germany. Then the well known policy of "checks and balances" of Colonel Beck came into play—playing French imperialists against German imperialists through the practice of selling one or the other short in a crisis. This, however, made Poland an adjunct of Hitler during the push on Austria and Czechoslovakia. But after Munich, even the Polish imperialists saw that they were right in line for extinction. Danzig, the Corridor, the Ukraine, Silesia were not mere problems of minority adjustment. The existence of Poland was at stake. It still is. Beck is left with neither a check nor a balance.

The National Democrats, who represent the Polish bourgeoisie, are opposed to the idea of German domination right now. In czarist days the Germans might woo them with some offer. But today with Hitler's financial setup they can expect nothing but annihilation, like the Czechs. The Pilsudski people can gain nothing under German domination; they can only lose their lands. And their lands are on the Soviet border. So the Polish Junkers have all to lose in any sort of Munich forced upon them by the English.

DEMOCRACY OR ELSE

There is little doubt that the Polish people, aware of the Czechs' fate, will fight for their existence if invaded by the Nazis. But to be fully successful the country's great need is democracy, democracy, and then more democracy. Only this can release the enthusiasm of the masses for freedom. Only this can maintain their confidence in the rulers of Poland that they wish to remain as a state. Should these rulers of Poland prefer civic suicide, then the people have no choice but to turn from their westward betrayers to the east.

Of course, among the Polish bourgeoisie, both landed as well as industrial, there exists a deep hatred of the socialist state next door. However, the "wolf, wolf" cry of the Russian baiters has become feeble during the last twenty years. The National Democrats have been at pains to point out to the pro-Pilsudski folk that the menace is not Russian but German. They are being proved right today. The Camp of National Unity government has removed all the army forces from the eastern border.

THE RED ARMY

As Voroshilov pointed out in his explanation of the failure of the Anglo-French mission, the Polish government was unwilling to have the Red Army enter Poland for purposes of meeting an aggressor. This made any military pact unworkable so the negotiations collapsed. The Polish bourgeoisie have long been opposed to any military aid from the Soviets, not due to any fear of occupation, but due to the fear that the presence of the Soviet troops would hasten the revolutionizing of the Polish people. It's a pity that this class bias upset the Anglo-French negotiations and hinders a pact of mutual assistance with the Soviets. Both of these would be a sure guarantee against the invasion of a German army. But as far as the Polish government goes, its calmness and resolution shows that it knows full well that the German-Soviet Pact of Non-Aggression does not in any way endanger the situation in Poland.

Today the greatest menace to Poland is its own lack of internal democracy. The election of the Polish parliament—the Sejm—is nothing but a sham. The electoral law permits the use of the ballot only to those candidates approved by the government-controlled election boards. The Ozon or Camp of National Unity therefore controls the Sejm with its puppets, as Tammany Hall used to control New York City.

But the municipal elections, where some elements of democracy still remain, present a truer picture of the people's expression. There the government party was overwhelmingly defeated by the right- and left-wing opposition—the left wing, composed of socialist and peasant parties, having the edge on the people's mandate.

WHAT THE PEOPLE WANT

From the beginning of the present crisis, both the right- and left-wing opposition have united in petitioning the government for a greater democratization of the regime. They ask for the formation of a government of national confidence and unity. They ask for the dissolution of the present puppet Sejm. They ask for the liberalization of the election law and the election of a new Sejm. So far all these demands have gone unheeded, the only concession being the admission of opposition representatives to the War Loan Commission.

This unity is superficial, as can be imagined. For the party of the bourgeoisie, the National Party (formerly the National Democrats), the Endeks or industrial bourgeoisie, the Socialist Party, the Peasant Party, and the Democratic Party have the most divergent aims. The so-called Labor Party nominally headed by Paderewski and General Heller has no mass following but, being composed of prominent "patriotic" individuals, could act as a liaison between the right and left opposition.

But as it is now, the only organized force of resistance is the army and the administrators of the government. Yet, despite the sharpshooting of Hitler and the pressure of the "war of nerves," nothing has given way. After all, the Poles themselves are no mean shakes at this war-of-nerves business, as the jittery French imperialists can tell you. It has been the base of Colonel Beck's "check and balance" system of political diddling.

The current press reports show no weakening in this contradictory alignment within the Polish state. No doubt the various elements of the national front are being submitted to all sorts of pressure, bribery, and outright intimidation—as was the case with the Czechoslovaks. But the Poles have been let down before and they know what it feels like. If they were today as naive as the Czech bourgeoisie, it would be unnecessary to print this article.

In the face of fascism, extraordinary heroism is not necessary, nor does successful resistance to Munichism demand the utmost in patriotism. A disinclination towards suicide is adequate.

JOHN STARK.

How About Warsaw?

SUMMING up the events of last week, the press and official circles came to optimistic conclusions. Germany is isolated, they think, as the Russo-German Pact has failed to produce the effect the Nazis expected. The "peace front" is now stronger than ever and Germany's friends of a week ago have now gone over to the camp of the neutrals, and many neutrals, including the United States, side with the "peace front."—Jerzy Szapiro, from Warsaw, New York *Times*, August 28.

Horthy to Mussolini

ON A recent visit to Rome, Admiral Horthy, regent of Hungary, was asked by Mussolini why he used the title of admiral. "You have no navy," said Il Duce. "Why do you have a finance minister?" said Admiral Horthy.

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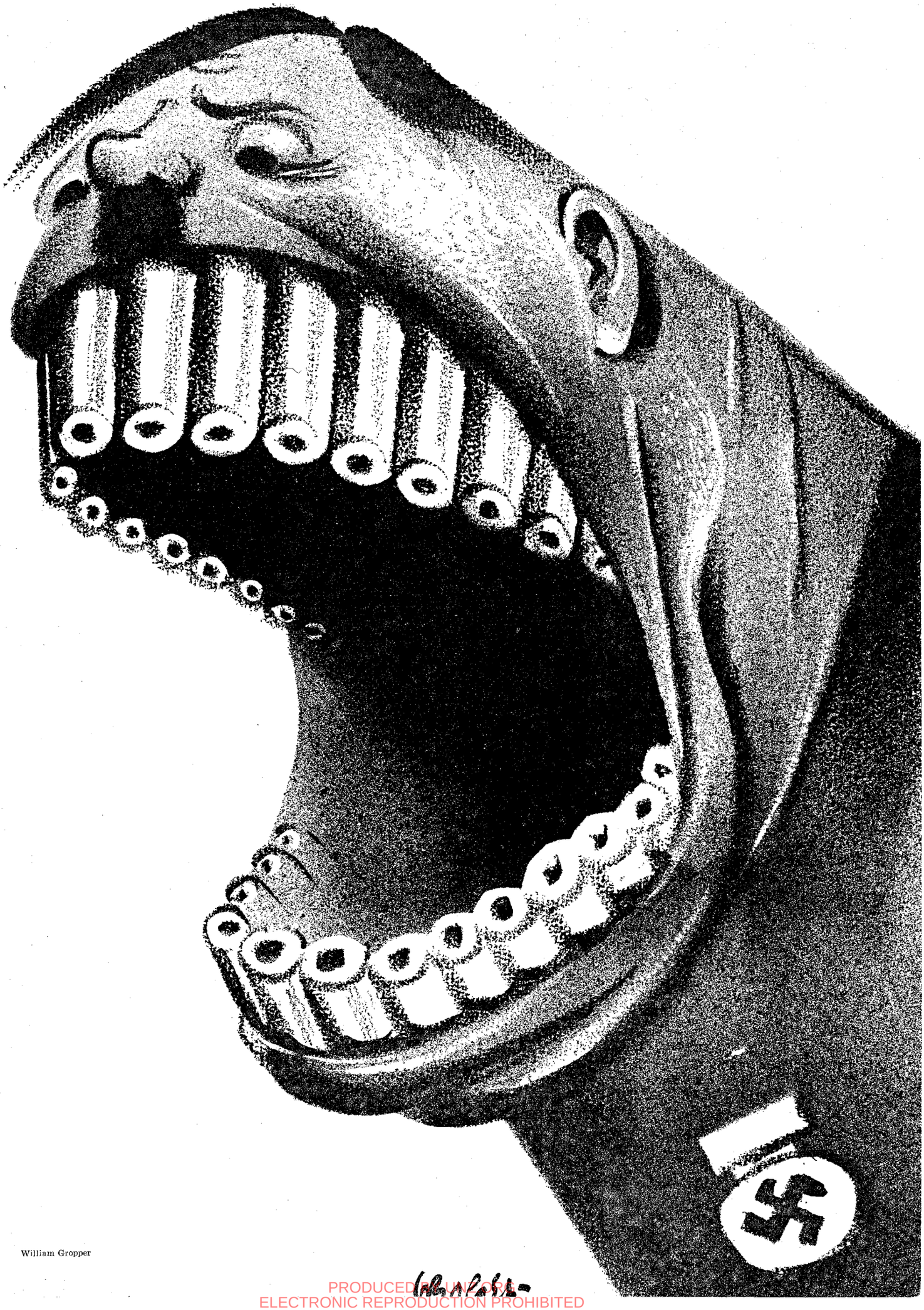

William Gropper

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AN EDITORIAL ARTICLE

Why the Pact Was Signed

The events leading up toward a second Munich and how the Soviet Union affected their course. Politics and fiction. The answers to honest confusion.

A WEEK has passed since the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact was signed. The official provisions have been made public to the world. Its effects have already rearranged the course of history.

People who were bothered at all by the pact question the meaning of Articles II and IV. In the case of the first article "both countries refrain from any violence, from any aggressive action, and any attack against each other either individually or jointly with other powers." That is clear and simple, and requires no apologies. Since the Soviet Union has never intended or planned violence, or any aggressive action, or any attack upon Germany, these provisions in no way constitute a departure from Soviet foreign policy. On the contrary, Hitler's pledge requires explanation. For Hitler, by the written and spoken word, and by the record of his career, has planned violence, aggressive action, and attack against the Soviet Republics.

ARTICLE IV

Article IV declares that "neither of the contracting parties will participate in any grouping of powers which is directly or indirectly aimed against the other contracting party." The Soviet Union has never engaged in any alliance directly or indirectly aimed against Germany. Its membership in the League of Nations, its signing of the French and Czechoslovak mutual assistance treaties, its non-aggression treaties with other nations in Europe, all emphasize its desire to preserve international law, multilateral security, and world peace. In fact, careful readers of the Franco-Soviet Pact will learn that *Germany* was offered a place in a whole system of security alliances as far back as May 1935. In any case, Article IV does not infringe upon Soviet freedom of defensive action. A peace front with England and France, should those countries desire it at some time in the future, would be directed only toward the preservation of European peace. Marshal Voroshilov made this completely clear in his answers to questions in *Pravda* on August 27. He pointed out that the Poles had refused Soviet military assistance in the only way it could have been given, that is, across their borders. He emphasized that "the military negotiations with Great Britain and France were broken off not because the USSR concluded a non-aggression pact with Germany, but, on the contrary, the USSR concluded a non-aggression pact with Germany, among other reasons, as a result of the fact that military negotiations with France and Great Britain reached a deadlock in view of insuperable differences."

Let it be remembered that France and England both concluded non-aggression pacts with Germany after the Munich conference presumably establishing "peace in our time." Both France and England countersigned a German guarantee of non-aggression against the protectorate of Czechoslovakia.

But on March 15 Herr Hitler broke all of his pledges and marched into Czechoslovakia. This was part of the strategic plan of Munich, a plan which was essentially (as Alter Brody points out elsewhere in this issue) a conference of strategy for a campaign of aggression against the Soviet Union. The rape of Czechoslovakia bothered the Munichers only in so far as it aroused popular disgust and resentment with appeasement politics. Thereupon Chamberlain scurried to give pledges to Rumania, Poland, Greece, and Turkey. The Soviet Union, however, proposed a mutual assistance pact with France and Great Britain. It was not until May 6 that the British replied and negotiations were undertaken. Public opinion, hopeful and ready for even hesitant steps toward true collective security, hailed the development. Even Chamberlain's sins might be expiated if the peace front against aggression were formed.

The Russians were forthright. They wanted complete reciprocity between the three parties of the proposed alliance. Each must be prepared to go to the aid of the other in case anyone is directly or indirectly attacked, or because any nation has gone to the aid of a third state that has suffered aggression. Great Britain demanded that the Soviet Union guarantee not only Poland, Belgium, Greece, Rumania, and Turkey, but also Holland and Switzerland. The latter two countries do not even have normal diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. Nor did any of the former insist that they wanted the Russian guarantee. But the Soviet Union was willing, and requested in return only that Great Britain guarantee the Baltic countries bordering upon the Soviet Union from direct or indirect aggression. This the British refused to do, on the grounds that these states refused to be guaranteed by the Soviet Union, ignoring its own demands upon the Soviet Union and ignoring the fact that the Baltic states might change their minds with the wolf at the door.

WHILE BRITAIN STALLED

But while the British were stalling on the Soviet pact, they were carrying on suspicious, double-dealing relations with the Nazis. Editorialists who flush with manufactured indignation about Russian "duplicity" should refresh their memories with a few developments since the Ides of March.

First of all, Chamberlain handed over to the Nazis $6,000,000 of Czech gold, legally the property of the Benes government, then on deposit in British banks. At the same time, the French were yielding to Franco Spanish gold, belonging to the legal Negrin government. The Nazis were given the royalties from the stolen patents of the Bren guns. The Italians were given permission to keep their war materials in Spain, thus violating a provision of the highly touted Anglo-Italian agreement. Negotiations were revived between the Federation of British Industries and Nazi industrialists for a trade pact, intended to divide the world into spheres of influence directed against France, the United States, and all other powers. Mr. Hudson, British overseas undersecretary, suggested to Mr. Wohlthat, the Nazi trade minister, that $5,000,000,000 be loaned to Germany for the rehabilitation of her economy. In the House of Commons, the prime minister expressed regret only that the scheme had been publicized, not that it had been proposed. Sir Oliver Stanley, chairman of the British Board of Trade, and Mr. Hudson prepared to leave for Berlin to negotiate a trade pact with Germany. During these same few months, the Craigie-Arita discussions began in the Far East, calculated to give the 50,000,000 ounces of Chinese silver to Japan and arrange a new Munich in that area at the expense of China and the United States.

Zhdanov, member of the Political Bureau of the Soviet Communist Party, in a letter to *Pravda* on June 29, remarked that such goings-on during political discussions for an anti-aggression alliance were rather strange. In the seventy-five days of negotiations, said he, the British have consumed fifty-nine in making replies to the Russian proposals.

"It can hardly be doubted," says Robert Dell, veteran European observer and *Nation* contributor, writing in the August 1939 *Living Age*, that "he [Chamberlain] never wished or intended the negotiations with Russia to succeed, and started them only in the hope that they would frighten Hitler into coming to an arrangement with England on better terms."

Nor did the Russian suggestion that military talks take place, in the hope of speeding the political talks, alter the situation. The British mission was second-rate: one of the king's aide-de-camps; an air marshal in charge of training; a major-general with a good record as attache to one of the British embassies. They took their time in getting to Moscow. It was commented in France that they would have been sent on bicycles, if bicycles could float. On the other hand, the Russians appointed their five men, including war, navy,

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and air commissars: Voroshilov, Kuznetzov, and Loktionov. When the Anglo-French mission finally arrived it was discovered that they had no mandate from their governments. They had come to discuss the midsummer weather in Moscow, to talk of cabbages and kings. Primarily, of course, they came to stall the negotiations still further and enable Chamberlain to bulldoze Parliament into going home on August 3.

It is here that the position of Poland must be understood and Marshal Voroshilov's statement of August 27 helps us understand it. The Polish government declared, in the words of Voroshilov, that "it did not need and would not accept the military assistance of the USSR." Presumably the Poles were confident of their own strength. Or else they were satisfied that their Anglo-French pledges were enough to defend them. Or still again, the Polish government had itself long ago decided to give way to Hitler on the issue of Danzig, and was bargaining for concessions to herself in return for concessions to Hitler.

But this does not in itself reveal the dimensions of British duplicity. For the Anglo-French-Soviet mutual assistance pact could still have been signed. The Polish attitude only helped enforce what the Russians suspected from the whole complex of events, namely, that the British never intended to conclude a peace front, but only to ensnare the Russian bear in a trap. Perhaps the Polish knights themselves had a hand in preparing the trap.

This was really a signal to Hitler. The war of nerves against Poland began in earnest, coupled with mobilizations, direct negotiations with Beck, the Polish foreign minister, soundings in the Vatican and in Washington for some kind of appeal that would set the stage for another Munich. During this whole time, says the London *Daily Worker* of August 7, a British mission headed by Professor Riley was in Danzig, gathering information to prove that the Free City was not economically indispensable to Poland.

WHAT MME. TABOUIS SAID

Things were riding to a climax. And now comes a dispatch by Mme. Genevieve Tabouis, the famous French foreign affairs expert, writing for the *New Republic* of August 23. If the editors of our worthy contemporary had read their own expert on foreign affairs with some care last week, perhaps they would have kept their balance when the locomotive of history took a rather sharp turn.

Mme. Tabouis wrote a sensational dispatch. Even if it contains only the kernel of the full truth, it emphasizes the critical nature of the situation. She says that according to Hitler's ambassadors, "Paris and London would bow before a *fait accompli,*" so a surprise attack upon Poland would be worth the risk. Further, that Hitler received a "long telegram from his ambassador in Tokyo informing him that Japan had decided to attack Russia in six weeks time" whereupon the chancellor ordered full German and Italian support to the Japanese.

Will Hitler risk playing the ultimate poker hand in which his cards are none too strong? asks Miss Tabouis. And she answers: "*The French high command is of the opinion that come what may, the master of the Third Reich is going to take the chance.*" (Our italics.)

Even if Mme. Tabouis' information is only partly true, it means that Moscow realized the following: The Japanese were about to attack, or seriously embarrass, the Soviet Union in the East. The British and French governments were ready for a Munich. The Poles were attempting to shunt the Nazis to the South and East, probably expecting in return for Danzig to receive a port in Lithuania. Remember that the Polish march to Lithuania was halted last October only when the Soviet Union threatened to denounce its non-aggression pact.

In this situation, the Soviet Union, basing itself firmly on principle, and brilliantly on the needs of the strategic moment, decided to resume negotiations for a trade agreement, and then expressed willingness to sign a non-aggression pact. In the intervening hours, no peace-loving septuagenarian dropped out of the gray Russian skies.

Text of the Pact

THE government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the government of Germany, led by a desire to consolidate the cause of peace between the USSR and Germany, and proceeding from the basic provisions of the treaty on neutrality concluded between the USSR and Germany in April 1926, arrived at the following agreement:

ARTICLE I

The two contracting parties undertake to refrain from any violence, from any aggressive action, and any attack against each other, either individually or jointly with other powers.

ARTICLE II

In the event that either of the contracting parties should be subjected to military action on the part of a third power, the other contracting party will not lend that power support in any form.

ARTICLE III

The governments of the two contracting parties will in the future maintain contact for consultation in order to inform each other on matters affecting their common interests.

ARTICLE IV

Neither of the contracting parties will participate in any grouping of powers which is either directly or indirectly aimed against the other contracting party.

ARTICLE V

In the event of disputes or conflicts arising between the contracting parties on matters of one or another kind, the two parties will solve these disputes or conflicts exclusively in a peaceful way through an amicable exchange of views or in case of need by setting up commissions for settlement of the conflict.

ARTICLE VI

The present pact is concluded for a term of ten years with provision that unless one of the contracting parties denounces it one year before expiration of this term, the term of validity of the pact will be considered automatically prolonged for the next five years.

ARTICLE VII

The present pact is subject to ratification within the shortest possible space of time. The exchange of ratification instruments shall take place in Berlin. The pact comes into effect as soon as it is signed.

Done in Moscow in two copies, August 23, 1939.

THERE MAY BE A MUNICH

In essence, what happened? The basic issue, redefined for the whole world, is fascism versus democracy, as we have always insisted, not fascism versus Communism. The pages of *Mein Kampf* have been turned back and those passages underscored in which Hitler speaks of crushing France and settling scores with Britain. The French and British people are compelled to realize that the policies of their own leaders are responsible for the exposed position in which they find themselves. Poland is compelled to stand firm and not speculate upon deflecting Hitler eastward. The anti-Comintern alliance is at least temporarily smashed, with Mussolini clinging to straws to salvage something for himself, with the Japanese Cabinet acknowledging its defeat by resigning.

There may be a Munich, said the Soviet Union, at Poland's expense, at the expense of Great Britain and France, but it will not be a Munich to which the Soviet Union is party. Was this a service to the cause of peace? Most assuredly. It was a service not merely because the Soviet Union had been strengthened in relation to Hitler, but because the true facts of the real situation were revealed to the world.

SOME QUESTIONS

Now, then, there are questions—some important, others unimportant and even childish.

For example, the question is asked: *Does the Soviet-German Pact mean an aggressive, military alliance between Hitler and Stalin, perhaps for the division of Europe among themselves?*

No, that is nonsense, pure nonsense. This is no alliance between fascism and Communism. This is a non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Germany. There can be unity between fascism and Communism only when apples start dropping upward, when straight lines become the longest distance between two points.

Q. Why was there no escape clause in the pact?

In truth, it was naive to expect an escape clause, nor is the meaning and effect of the pact in any way altered by the absence of such a clause. The Soviet Union wants this pact to mean what it says, to breed no illusions, either in London or Warsaw or anywhere else. If, and when, Germany violates this pact and either directly or indirectly infringes on Soviet

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borders, the Soviet Union will find ways to retain its freedom of action.

Q. Does this mean that anti-fascists and Communists can no longer boycott Nazi goods?

No, nothing in the pact makes reference to such questions. Since its membership in the League of Nations the Soviet Union has fought for the application of collective sanctions against the aggressor, as in the case of Ethiopia (in which it had no direct interest), as in the case of China and Spain. But it will not engage in unilateral sanctions and thus be left out on a limb, which is just what Chamberlain and his pals were trying to do. Our boycott in the United States was never an instrument of Soviet foreign policy. By all means, the boycott should be intensified.

Q. Does this mean that the Soviet Union isolates itself from European affairs?

The Soviet Union will not help any people unless they help themselves. It will not serve as a pawn in any combination of powers directed against its own security. But of course the Soviet Union is intensely concerned with the integrity of every democratic nation, with peace, and with multilateral security. The Chinese and Spanish peoples will attest to that fact. So will President Benes of Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union, as well as all Communists, know that the path to socialism lies through the defense and extension of democracy, which means, at this moment, a sharp struggle against the betrayers of democracy and the agents of fascism.

Q. Does this mean that if another Munich comes, Stalin was responsible for it?

Nonsense. The Munich policy flows from the treachery and weakness of the tories and their allies. The first Munich was not a product of Soviet policy and, as the world is seeing now, a second Munich can likewise be only a product of Chamberlain-Daladier diplomacy. If anything, the Russian move was intended to forestall another Munich, by revealing the *true* roles of the *real* actors in the *actual* plot.

Q. Does not this pact throw doubt upon the validity of the Moscow trials and the execution of the Tukhachevsky group of generals?

Tukhachevsky connived with the German General Staff, offering the Soviet Ukraine to the Nazis, which would have meant the dismemberment of the Soviet Union. The present pact is not a pact of mutual assistance. It is not directed against the West. It cannot possibly result in dismembering the Soviet Union and has, in fact, cornered rather than strengthened Hitler. All other speculations belong in the realm of romantic and paradoxical literature, not politics.

Q. What were Hitler's calculations in signing the non-aggression pact?

As far as can be seen, he calculated on using the pact to achieve as much as possible for himself at another Munich. It is impossible to say at the moment whether, from his point of view, swallowing a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, antagonizing his Rome ally, and letting his Tokyo ally down, may not be compensated by a victory over Poland and another Munich. But Hitler's freedom of action has been greatly narrowed by the Soviet move. For perhaps the first time in his career, Hitler is confronted with some real choices: to fight, or back down. If he fights, the chances are greatly against him. If he backs down, his position is equally endangered, perhaps fatally so.

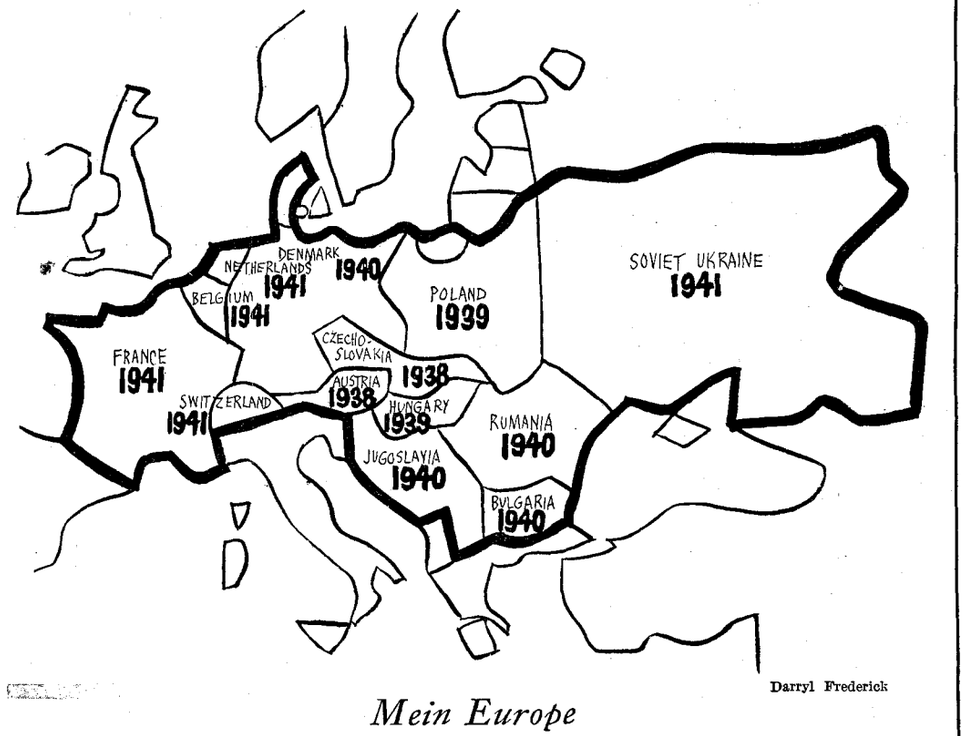
Q. What was the effect of the pact upon the anti-Comintern alliance?

Its effects upon Japan are already evident. The Japanese Cabinet has resigned. The policy of the army, seeking an alliance with the axis, is discredited. Munich politics between the British government and Japan at the expense of China and the United States has received as great a blow. Conversely the position of China is strengthened. But, although Japanese politics is in crisis, it must not be supposed that even more reactionary trends in Japan are not possible. The whole point is, however, that the Japanese reactionaries and fascists must maneuver within an ever narrower, narrower area of operations in both external and internal affairs.

For Rome, the first results were stunning. For days, Mussolini did not even mobilize. The embarrassment of Virginio Gayda was touching, and even pleasurable to behold. But, as it became clear in the middle of last week that there were still possibilities of a Munich development, in which Hitler might still emerge with partial, or fuller, gains, Mussolini began to assist in the pressure for a settlement of the Polish crisis. His area of operations had also been narrowed. But like a boxer who feels his legs weakening, and his breath failing, Mussolini comes back in the hope of winning all in a lucky punch.

Q. What are the consequences of the pact for the United States?

The American people have been given an object lesson in the true methods and aims of Chamberlain diplomacy. In the Far East, the American national position has been strengthened. Japanese and British designs against the interest of the United States and China have been frustrated, at least for a time. The exposure of Chamberlain's plans has made it more difficult for the proponents of his policy in our own State Department to succeed, just as it has become more difficult (although not impossible) for Chamberlain himself to achieve his historic intentions. Obviously, President Roosevelt's initiative enables the whole people to see how illusory is the position of the isolationists, how the isolationist propaganda dovetails with the fascist hopes and plans. What this country still needs is a clear, decisive foreign policy that leaves no loopholes for the fascists, that gives the nation guarantees, rather than gambles.



Mein Europe

THIS map, taken from propaganda issued by the Nazis throughout Czechoslovakia before the Munich crisis, shows the definite planning of aggression by Hitler. The dates, many of which have been tragically kept, show the scheduled invasions to be arranged with the Munichmen. Collective security against aggression can disrupt this calendar. The Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact proved that German aggression was aimed at the smaller countries, lastly at the USSR.

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Liberals and the Pact

"Unexpected bombshells" of the past that were neither unexpected nor bombshells. What happened before last week. The experience of past crises.

EVERY year or so the diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and its liberal sympathizers in the capitalist democracies are ruptured by what seems to the latter a political bombshell. In retrospect these "bombshells" have proved to be neither unexpected political phenomena nor startling violations of fundamental Soviet principles and practice. But to many liberals, whose historical horizon is bounded by what they can remember of the past fortnight's newspaper reading, these developments are undoubtedly startling and upsetting. They start scurrying belligerently to the nearest Communist for an explanation, and their axiom is that the Soviet Union is guilty until it is proved innocent.

In 1935, for instance, as some of these liberals may remember with embarrassment, there was quite a flurry over the Franco-Soviet defensive alliance. The very people who are now denouncing the Soviet Union for "betraying the democracies" were then horrified at the "betrayal of socialism" involved in a socialist state's entering into a military alliance with a capitalist democracy — even though it was directed against Nazi Germany. "Does that mean," they asked crushingly, "that the Communist Party of France is going to support the French government in an 'imperialist' war with Germany? What about the Leninist slogan of turning the imperialist war into a civil war?" It may not seem difficult in 1939 to reply to such questions, but in 1935 it was not easy to convince these intransigent revolutionists.

BLAMING THE USSR

In 1936, during the Ethiopian crisis, there was the question of "Soviet oil." When the tories and their French prototypes categorically refused the Soviet demand for full sanctions, including oil, against the Italian aggressors, many "friends" of the Soviet Union were disappointed because the USSR did not go on with a useless unilateral embargo on Italy and thereby place itself in a dangerously isolated diplomatic position. In 1937 there were the Moscow trials. By 1938 when the Spanish representatives of Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin, etc., staged a counter-revolutionary putsch in Barcelona at the time when the loyalist army was fighting with its back against the wall, many of those skeptical of the Moscow trials were convinced. Even at Munich, when the Soviet Union stood out as the only nation that had preserved its honor in the crisis, the betrayers of Czechoslovakia tried to whitewash their treachery by insinuating that the Soviet Union refused to commit itself about aiding Czechoslovakia. Many liberals were willing to lend a ready ear to this campaign. Six months later ex-President Benes admitted, somewhat belatedly, that even after England and France had betrayed Czechoslovakia the Soviet Union offered to back Czechoslovakia singlehanded, provided the Czech army resisted at the Sudeten line.

Just now our liberal friends are stunned by a new "bombshell," the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact. History, which has always vindicated the Soviet Union's policy, will repeat itself. A few months from now, perhaps a few weeks from now, many of our friends will feel very guilty about their lack of intelligence if not about their lack of confidence. In the meantime let me prescribe a review of recent diplomatic history as a sedative for their nerves.

WHAT HAPPENED AT MUNICH

The Soviet Union has scored a number of impressive diplomatic triumphs in the course of its existence but it would be idle to claim that it has not suffered some serious defeats. The proposed four-power Munich pact was the worst of them. To appraise realistically the present Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact, it is necessary to grasp the full implications of what happened at Munich and *why* it happened.

Most people speak glibly of the "Munich betrayal" but on analysis it will be found that they have only a hazy idea of what was betrayed. Chamberlain did not fly to Godesberg and Berchtesgaden just to inform Hitler that Britain would not defend Czechoslovakia. The British ambassador at Berlin could easily have taken care of such a diplomatic errand and saved a very old man several arduous airplane trips. But Chamberlain did not fly to Godesberg and Berchtesgaden just to arrange for the betrayal and partition of Czechoslovakia. *He flew there to connive for the betrayal and partition of the Soviet Union.* Before Munich, only a few astute political analysts like Prof. Frederick L. Schuman (in a series of articles in the *New Republic*) were able to penetrate the tory designs. After Munich the whole world was taken into the secret—simply because the tories were so cocksure about the success of their plot that they crowed aloud about it in the world press. "Peace" was assured, they chortled as they handed Czechoslovakia, the gateway to the East, to Hitler. "On to the Ukraine!" was the jubilant cry of the London and Paris press. "There would be no war in Europe," Ambassador Kennedy joyfully assured President Roosevelt—because Hitler would be busy attacking the Soviet Union. In that October week, Chamberlain and Daladier stumbled over themselves in their haste to conclude non-aggression pacts with Germany, *though France was still bound to the Soviet Union in a defensive military alliance aimed to preserve peace in Europe.*

These Anglo-German and Franco-German non-aggression pacts—be it remembered by those who cannot get the present Soviet-German Pact out of their minds—are supposedly still in force. In those October days the French press declared contemptuously that the Franco-Soviet military alliance (which, by the way, France consistently refused to implement with staff talks) was a dead letter now and it was not even necessary to denounce it. And in preparation for the day when France would be called upon to do its part in the anti-Soviet four power pact, there was serious talk of outlawing the French Communist Party. For it is puerile to think that the tories and Daladier were planning to stand by idly and lick their chops while Hitler was carving up the Soviet Union. They knew very well that Hitler would need all the help he could get for such a job and in return they expected to participate in the spoils. One thing is clear. The four power pact that was planned by Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler, and Mussolini at Munich had much more important objectives than the partition of Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia was pretty safely in the Nazi maw when the German army occupied the Sudeten fortresses. Surely it did not need an alliance of Britain, France, Germany, and Italy to help Hitler digest the remains of defenseless little Czechoslovakia. The four power pact was primarily aimed at the Soviet Union, and as I have said before, the tory press made no effort to conceal that fact.

WHY IT HAPPENED

This is what happened at Munich. It is now fruitful to consider one of the reasons *why* it happened. Specifically, how was it that despite Soviet diplomacy a diplomatic situation could develop in Europe which made it possible for the Soviet Union to be so isolated diplomatically that all the powers of Europe could unite in a pact to destroy it, even though it was well known that it harbored no aggressive designs against any one of them? The explanation for the Soviet diplomatic impotence at Munich lies in the inherent disadvantage which Soviet diplomacy labors under. This diplomatic "handicap" lies in the public knowledge that the Soviet foreign policy is immovably anchored to the fact that the USSR is the world's only proletarian state and the only country whose inner economic contradictions have been resolved by socialism. As the world's only proletarian state it can never enter into a military alliance with the chief enemy of the proletariat. As the only country that has resolved its economic contradictions by socialism it has no need for war as an instrument of imperialist expansion and therefore can

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never enter into any aggressive alliance either with the fascist powers or with the capitalist powers.

As a result, the Soviet Union, alone among world powers, comes to the international diplomatic card table with its cards up. Now the essence of the diplomatic game is to keep your opponents and even your partners guessing — as Anglo-French, Italo-German, and German-Japanese relations abundantly testify. Contrary to the propaganda which seeks to portray Soviet diplomacy as mysterious and unpredictable, Soviet diplomacy suffers from being altogether too predictable. Despite the flood of lies that were and are being poured out on the subject, Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler, and Mussolini have always known for certain that there is a gulf between the world's only socialist state and the world's fascist states which can never be bridged to the extent of a military alliance. Hence the Soviet Union's liberty of action is severely limited in any diplomatic conference, for its position can be gauged in advance.

It is otherwise with the fascist and capitalist powers. An Anglo-German alliance at the expense of France or Italy may or may not be improbable but it is definitely not impossible. The same holds true of a Franco-British-Italian combination against Germany, an Anglo-Japanese combination against the United States, or a four power pact of Britain, France, Germany, Italy against the Soviet Union, even while, as in September 1938, the aforementioned Britain and France are dickering for the support of the Soviet Union against Germany and Italy. This unscrupulous liberty of action which the capitalist and fascist powers enjoy is their main stack of chips. It enabled, and still enables, Britain and France on the one hand to invoke the threat of a Soviet alliance in case of a fascist attack on them, and on the other hand to offer Hitler and Mussolini the inducement of a four power pact between Britain, France, Germany, and Italy to organize the partition of the Soviet Union. But neither at Munich nor now can the Soviet Union counter with the threat of a Soviet-German alliance against Britain and France, because such a step is discounted in advance by Chamberlain and Daladier as a diplomatic impossibility.

Even if Soviet diplomats had been naive enough to forget the lesson of Munich, Chamberlain has since done his best to keep them reminded. When the Polish crisis broke in April, Chamberlain rushed in to "guarantee" Poland, completely ignoring the existence of "isolated" Russia. Now that the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact has been signed it is suddenly discovered by our press that the British guarantee is worthless without Soviet aid. If so, what motivated Chamberlain in making a guarantee that he must have known was worthless? Such a guarantee could not protect the integrity of Poland but it *could* light the flames of war in the East, and Chamberlain's old eyes are always hopefully turned toward the East.

Exposed and prodded by the Opposition in Parliament, Chamberlain finally made a gesture of inviting the Soviet Union to join an anti-aggression front. But it became evident very early that it was only a gesture—a gesture to gain time for another Munich. Weeks and months passed in "bickerings" over points that should have been taken for granted as the only possible bases of a genuine anti-aggression front—the British ingeniously maintaining at first that the Soviet Union should be obligated to come to the aid of Britain and France but not vice versa. In the meantime, while the negotiations (conducted by a senior Foreign Office clerk) proceeded, Chamberlain was brazenly dickering with Hitler for another Munich. Every other week a new Munich trial balloon made the headlines. But, as I remember, there were no horrified editorial gasps such as have greeted the news of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact. Perhaps it is the capitalist press' subtle way of paying a compliment to the Soviet Union, to judge it by a higher code of ethics than England or France. But the Soviet Union has a more important mission in the world than fishing for the compliments of the capitalist press. It is interested in safeguarding itself and the future of democracy and of world socialism against the danger of another four power pact such as Chamberlain brewed out of the remains of Czechoslovakia. That is the A B C of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact. If England and France are still interested in stopping fascist aggression, the front door of the Soviet Union is still open. But if their object is to engage the Soviet Union in diplomatic "conversations" while their accomplices break in at the back door, they will find that the back door has been securely locked.

THE REAL CHOICE

The fallacy underlying liberal confusion on the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact is the idea, carefully fostered by British propaganda, that the Soviet Union was choosing between a democratic front against fascist aggression and a Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact, when it signed the latter. Nothing could be further from the truth. The tactics of Anglo-French diplomacy during the protracted Anglo-French-Russian negotiations, brought home to Moscow the fact that the choice was fast narrowing down to the kind of exposed isolation into which Chamberlain maneuvered the Soviet Union after Munich, and a Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact. One fact stood out alarmingly. If Chamberlain was plotting another Munich with Poland in the role of Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union could not afford to follow a policy of embattled isolation such as it followed when Czechoslovakia turned down its last-minute offer of single-handed intervention. Poland was too dangerously close for such a policy. When the Nazis organized "Carpatho-Ukraine" out of Czechoslovak Ruthenia, the Soviet Union could afford to smile. But the Soviet Union could not afford to stand by idly if, as a result of a Polish partition, the Nazis should entrench themselves in Polish Ukraine or Polish White Russia, ethnographic extensions respectively of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic and the White Russian Soviet Republic. Nor could the Russians ignore Nazi penetration of the Baltic countries within gunshot of Leningrad, as the British blithely recommended. An isolated Russia would be unable to intervene unless war actually reached its borders. As co-signer of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact the Soviet Union has no doubt made sure of safeguarding its interests against such an eventuality.

The Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact is a burglary insurance policy which Soviet diplomacy has been forced to take out against the threat of another and more dangerous Munich. Burglary insurance is no substitute for a vigorous drive to stamp out crime—but when so many convicted diplomatic criminals are on the police force, aiding and abetting crime, it is an indispensable precaution.

However, there is the likelihood that by thus taking the profit out of another Munich, the Soviet Union may yet save Poland from betrayal by its ardent allies. For the only possible value of a Polish Munich—as of a Czech Munich—to Chamberlain and Daladier is the creation of a four power pact to dismember the Soviet Union. By insuring itself against such a plot the Soviet Union may be insuring Poland against a Chamberlain-Daladier sell-out. If Poland cares to make this insurance absolute it must make up its mind quickly as to whether it prefers the presence of the Red Army as an ally to occupation by the Reichswehr.

ALTER BRODY.

On the Pact

Inside Germany

THE New York *Herald Tribune* editorial page, August 24, saw some implications in the Soviet-German Pact that should not be missed by any readers. Though the commercial press engaged in first-rate befuddlement in their news stories and generally in their editorials, some facts could not be blinked. Here are some:

> The obvious costs are several and not inconsiderable. He [Hitler] has had to throw over the Japanese—under the circumstances perhaps no great matter—rather seriously compromise his own and General Franco's position in Spain, and gravely alter the position of the Catholic Church in its already difficult relations with both axis dictators. To a certain extent he has made his own policy dependent upon Stalin's attitude, and given a pledge to the Kremlin which may yet prove very embarrassing to redeem. And he has administered a brutal shock to the supposed ideological basis of his own regime so cynically violent that one wonders whether the faith of even a regimented and propaganda-fed totalitarian public can sustain it without damage.
>
> But he has paid heavier costs than these. To

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the two democratic powers he has revealed his regime as not only cynically opportunistic in fact but as utterly unrestrained by any necessity for even appearing otherwise. He has divested his objectives of any pretense even to principle. One after another the world has watched him discard the allegedly fundamental and guiding doctrines of his policy as they have ceased to serve merely opportunistic needs. Most of his party program vanished when he came to power; "equality" disappeared as soon as he had attained it; "Germandom" was dropped when he yielded the south Tyrolese to Mussolini; "blood and soul" went with the annexation of the Czechs in Bohemia-Moravia, and now "the bulwark against Bolshevism," apparently the firmest of all pillars of his policy, disappears with one touch upon the controls of his propaganda machine. He has no doctrines, no policies, no aims, no program, except the blind program of brute power for itself.

That is the appalling demonstration. For with such a government negotiation is impossible. There is nothing to negotiate, no basis for reasoned adjustment, conciliation, or correlation of aims, since there are no aims. Reaching a stage of really desperate crisis he cannot even negotiate himself; and he has found no means of dealing with the Polish question save to make demands ever more exorbitant and therefore less capable of discussion.

Sir Alfred, You Traitor

SIR ALFRED DUFF COOPER, who resigned as first lord of the admiralty in protest of Munich, had the following to say on the German-Soviet Pact in the New York *Herald Tribune* of August 25:

A few days ago I wrote an article which, while it was in the hands of the printers, became out of date. In that article I urged the importance of concluding an agreement with Russia without further delay. . . .

I originally welcomed the appointment of the mission because I considered it proof that the British government believed that a political agreement was virtually concluded.

It was the more surprising to see that the appointment was followed by a slackening rather than an intensification of effort on the diplomatic side. First Strang was withdrawn and nobody was sent to take his place. So far as the public was aware the negotiations were suspended. The British people were left in the dark.

This was just the situation which those who opposed the rising of Parliament three weeks ago were anxious to avoid. And the situation has ended in just that calamity which they were anxious to avert.

Let no mistake be made about the extent of the calamity. In the second world war Great Britain and France morally have sustained a major defeat. The fact that we have experienced nothing but defeat during the last two years must not render us insensible to the effect of them. We must not, like a much hammered pugilist, become "punch-drunk."

Off to Canossa

THE irrepressible Geebee Shaw speaks out in the London *Times* with a whoop for the Russo-German Non-Aggression Pact. The fardown wit pointed out:

A week ago Dean Inge, writing in the *Evening Standard,* guessed that Hitler had gone to Canossa. A few days later the joyful news came that the dean was right and that Hitler is under the powerful thumb of Stalin, whose interest in peace is overwhelming. And everyone except myself is frightened out of his or her wits. Why? Am I mad? If not, why? Why? Why?

The London *Times* head was: "Can Anyone Explain?"—showing that all the journalistic lunkheads are not on the American commercial newspapers.

Ezekiel: 38, 39

NOT the least discerning of the non-Marxist interpreters of the Soviet-German peace agreement, which has been exercising the soothsayers of capitalism, is the Rev. Dr. William Ward Ayer, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, New York City. The *Herald Tribune* reports his weighty analysis thus:

"Russia and Germany have begun to make an alignment which will spell their ultimate doom at the hand of Divine Judgment." He explained that the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of "Ezekiel's prophecy make plain the meaning of this sudden and surprising alignment of two supposed hopelessly antagonistic nations."

"In these chapters," he declared, "the prophet speaks condemnation against Russia as the land of Magog, which is identified by the cities of Moscow and Tobolsk. The Germanic people represented as Gomer and all his bands, together with the nation of Turkey portrayed as Togarmah, are also under the prophetic condemnation. The Word of God says that the alignment will result in warfare against the nations that compose the old Roman empire and will finally bring about the awful bloodiness of Armageddon."

A more scholastic viewpoint is that of the Rev. Robert I. Gannon, S.J., president of Fordham University, whose philosophical dialectic is affirmed in the New York *Post:*

This ominous news should clear the issue in America once and for all. Even Union Square can see now that the looming struggle is not between fascism and Communism. It is between the natural law and the absolute state: between Christ and anti-Christ. The thing is Apocalyptic.

Or, as Jimmie Durante would say, "It's even mediocre!"

Auto City Mayor

Richard Reading's reactionary record. Economy for whom?

Detroit, Mich.

RICHARD READING, mayor of Detroit, was called "an able administrator," by Charles E. Coughlin, who lives nearby. Reading also has the nod from General Motors, Henry Ford, and Gerald L. K. Smith.

But he doesn't stand so well with most Detroiters. His record on every major political issue is equaled for toryism only by that of Luren Dickinson, the Michigan Methuselah.

Reading's handling of the relief situation has endeared him to no one but the auto barons. Allotments for food for the unemployed are now down to a nickel a meal, with thousands being cut off altogether. When the rolls were reaching a number exceeded only by the rolls of 1931, the mayor took to vilifying relief clients and insisted upon a purge. With the aid of the Red Squad and a spy bureau, he started a purge. It cost Detroit $100,000, proved exactly nothing, and saved $6,000.

In the Department of Public Works, Reading is starting a shakeup. General Motors approved of this, so they lent their Mr. Henry Beyster, efficiency expert, to the city. Mr. Beyster now works for the city for a $7,500 annual stipend. His first act in his new office was to purchase three hundred GM trucks. He keeps buying GM trucks.

On matters of public health, Detroit was doing very nicely not long ago. Paul de Kruif pointed to Detroit as a model in *The Fight for Life.* TB, cancer, diphtheria, syphilis, and other menacing diseases were being fought by municipal health officials. TB cases, for example, were being discovered and treated at the rate of five hundred a week. But it cost the city money which didn't pay back to the bosses, so Reading went to work on the situation. Reading, the Dies committee, and the local Hearst press collaborated and uncovered "Reds" among the Detroit microbe hunters. Result: TB cases now being discovered are twenty a week.

The city is $12,500,000 in debt, largely due to Reading's ministrations. One of his ways of meeting this was to jump taxes $2 on every $1,000 valuation, hitting the little fellows right between the eyes. But he handed back $10,000,000 in taxes to General Motors, Hudson Motor Car Corp., Timken Axle, and Ford. "Industry must be free of the burden of excessive taxation," he said.

The Public Utilities Commission of the state recently handed down a decision stating that "the consumers of gas in the city of Detroit have been overcharged $3,000,000 in the year 1938 by the Michigan Consolidated Gas Co." This company is connected with Chase National, a Rockefeller bank. The commission's charge has received no comment in the press from the mayor.

The American Civil Liberties Union rated the Detroit Police Department, since Reading, among the lowest in the country. Some months ago, the odor was so bad that fifteen captains and lieutenants had to be fired. But the end is not yet. Last week, a Mrs. Janet MacDonald killed herself and her ten-year-old daughter. Mrs. MacDonald had been employed by a crooked policy house, and she left a sensational suicide note telling exactly how Detroit cops are paid handsome grafts to allow gambling and policy houses to operate in the city. One Detroit cop is now on trial for brutally assaulting a Negro whom he had falsely arrested. Reading has little to say about all this.

Detroit will have its chance to get rid of Reading in the November elections. It probably will.

WILLIAM ALLAN.

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Thanks Be to My Uncle Miah

A short story by Edward Wall, whose "Words I Did Not Speak" was one of NM's literary sensations.

OLD Father Hinnery said mass on Friday morning, a requiem in mumbling, *kyrie eleison kriste eleison kyrie eleison,* solemn for hunger, defiance. I was the only altar boy, scheming that day to play hooky from school, from the seventh grade at Saint Malachi's in the Grove.

We came from the altar after mass, Father Hinnery leading, out to the sacristy. I waited, impatient, vague in attendance. He moved with no haste, closing the drawer, the little doors. I held his coat; I knelt and tugged to help him on with his rubbers.

I hung my cassock, my surplice, on hooks in the room with the castoff candelabra. I came back and leaned at the dark red leather-covered door, holding the door ajar, looking out across the altar rail.

The crowd stirred slowly, a shuffling hush in the far aisle, the Blessed Virgin's side. In the center aisle, all but lost to my view, the pallbearers walked, moving out with Allie McKeenan, his coffin draped with a flag.

"You knew that lad," Father Hinnery said.

I nodded, not looking. I remembered. All those buttons I wore, the ribbons to brighten my cap. Allie McKeenan gave them to me. And books, little pamphlets to read. He gave me flares to carry one night in a strikers' parade.

"He came laughing," Father Hinnery said, "leading the men from the mills. Halfway over the Putnam bridge, and no farther. With the major's marauders, the guards, the loyal legions and what-all, and murder blazing in their hearts. Would you have him bow down?"

"No, Father."

"He was the one, poor lad, who would wade through bullets. More than once I saw him, like the time we were off in France, and he was with Logan's boys in the Yankee Division. He's wearing his medals today, the first time ever he wore them."

I stood again at the altar door. Only stragglers moved in the aisles. The pallbearers, down the stone steps, were gone, deep in the crowd that filled the street, the sidewalk.

"What so proudly we hailed," Father Hinnery said, "all beautiful for glistening guns, for the poison, the pus that oozes from scabs on loyal legions, for tear-gas bombs. All bright in technicolor, Lord save us, for spacious skies."

I brought out the twisted walking-stick and held it before him. He made no move to take it. He folded, unfolded, a white satin scarf, then lined the scarf with pads of tissue to ward off a crease, and folded it over again. I hung the stick, by the crook of the handle, on the rightside pocket of his coat.

"I'll have to be hurrying, Father," I said.

"Hurrying, hurrying, all the time taking a great long lead off second base, worrying the poor heart of the pitcher."

"You'll see me, Father. At baseball practice this afternoon."

"I'd be grieving to go to Boston this afternoon," Father Hinnery said. "I've a note from Connie Mack. He's in town with his woebegone ball club, him and his lowly, lamentable A's."

"We need batting practice, Father. And a lot of drill on our new signals."

"No signals, no symbols, no nothing. No charts to guide you. Going out in the world, wherever you go, it's a great wonder to me you don't get lost."

I went out the side door to the convent walk. I vaulted the iron pipe fence, the little hedges. I ran across the lawn and stopped. Mother Superior, all black and white, and pink, called out to me. She came up to tap me tap-tap-tap on the arm.

"Are you being chased?" she asked me.

"No, Mother."

"Have you lost your way, or your mind? Which is it?"

"I'm in training, Mother," I said. "I'll be batting out nothing but homers and three-base hits in tomorrow's game with Saint Pat's, and I have to be in shape for all that running."

"It's a shameful, shameful way for an altar boy," Mother Superior said. "Go now, quietly. If you had the pride and the decency, you'd be making an Act of Contrition on your way to school."

"Yes, Mother."

I went down the convent walk. I turned again out of sight and fled, hurdling new geranium beds. I came out across the lawn in front of the church. The crowd was a solid mass, silent, motionless. I jabbed the backs of men on the edge of the crowd.

"I've got to get through," I said. I said it over and over again. "I've got a message for Jeremiah. It's from Father Hinnery."

A lane opened. I went through, shifting, zigzagging, still murmuring lies. The men from the weave room shoved me, yanked me through, bringing me up to the side of the hearse. My Uncle Miah sat at the wheel of the hearse, and I climbed in beside him where I had no right to be.

The hearse went forward, bound the long way for the Mount of Good Hope. The cars in the rear moved in line. We drove along in New Salem Street, slowly, between the broken ranks of the major's uneasy infantry.

"Father Hinnery's going to Boston," I said. "Connie Mack is asking, he wants to see him."

The soldiers gaped at us. They were clustered in huddles on either side of the street. They wanted, it seemed to me, to break out in sporadic whistling, to thumb their noses at one another, self-conscious in their tension. One of them, a little way ahead, strayed out from his squad; he walked vacantly into the path of the hearse. And instantly, with a stamp of his foot on the throttle, my Uncle Miah bore down upon him.

"Make way!" my Uncle Miah shouted. "Make way for the premier undertaker of Maine, Vermont, Massjewzetts, New Hampshire, and northern Rhode Island."

The soldier, bewildered, turned to flee. My Uncle Miah swerved the hearse and chased him all the way to the curb. The soldier leaped to the sidewalk. He stood there quaking, not hurt at all. My Uncle Miah growled, and the growling came in measured cadence like the deep-down humming of a chant.

"Lately," he said to me, "I've been missing them. I'm not so nimble as once I was."

"Are all those things true, Uncle Miah?"

"I'm saving my aim, my very best aim, for the major."

"I mean, about Maine, New Hampshire, all those places?"

"They're all of them true," he said, "and more. And in all of their far possessions out in the seas."

A truck roared out of Narragansett Road, an olive drab truck from the quartermaster's corps. The truck came on; the driver threatened. My Uncle Miah jammed the hearse forward to bar the way. He held up one hand and waved the truck to a halt. The driver turned sharply, obliquely, swearing in terror, and stopped. The canvas top of the truck, like that of an old covered wagon, shuddered.

"Don't you read the papers?" my Uncle Miah said to me. He prodded my ribs with his elbow.

"Was it in the Boston papers?" I said.

"Boston papers be damned. Filled with lies, lying mockeries, dishonest and deceitful. Like the things they'd say of the strike at the mills, the guards, the loyal legions. Like the stinking words the major would use. They're all one and the same."

He reached to the depths of a pocket in the door. He fumbled and brought out a copy of the *Northern New England Embalmer and Funeral Director,* special anniversary edition.

"Wouldn't you like to know how I worked myself up to my present eminence?" he asked me. He spread the crumpled magazine on my lap. With one hand, the other on the wheel, he rumpled through the pages.

"Take a look at that!" he pointed. "See what it says under my picture? *Jeremiah O'Shannahan, Premier Practitioner.* And that's not all. See here, in the fine print: *Jeremiah O'Shannahan, long a* . . . are you looking where I'm pointing? . . . *long a credit to the profession in northern New England, was honored last week at Hotel Statler at the anniversary dinner given by the Massachusetts Society of* blah-blah-blah, and so on. Do you see?"

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"It's a swell writeup, Uncle Miah," I said.

"It's nothing at all of the kind. This is a miserable sheet put out by the same lying wretches, and I pay it no heed at all. Now, you see? Thumb your way through the back of the book. That's it, where you find all the ads: *Compliments of Jeremiah O'Shannahan,* loud in three-quarters of a page, the whole thing in a border of little squashed-up acorns. That's why I got the writeup, the miserly words they have for sale. I could have bought a full-page ad, instead of three-quarters, and then they'd be calling me the 'Grand Old Dean of the Profession.' And who in his right mind, do you suppose, would ever take the trouble to care?"

Soldiers, heavily laden, shuffled along in New Salem Street. My Uncle Miah growled, still in a measured rhythm. A sergeant sounded a whistle. The soldiers sprawled in the street and struggled with dangling legs of a tripod, mounting another machine gun. The soldiers looked up. My Uncle Miah flounced a hand out of the window and cocked a thumb; with pointed forefinger, with wiggling thumb, he fired. We went on.

"Look!" my Uncle Miah shouted. "Would you look at the major in command! Take a good look at the shiny little scoundrel of a major blind drunk in his plush-lined car. Get up out of that, you impudent major! Get up out of that, you impudent brat, and let Mrs. Maguire sit down!"

I looked, but there was no major, no plush-lined car. There was only an old second-hand shop, with washing machines, handles for axes, and clipper-ship models drydocked amid mandolins. An old woman in a shawl came out; she paused to genuflect, to make the sign of the cross as the hearse went by.

"I didn't see any major," I said.

"You never missed a thing. When you looked and saw nothing, that was the major. That's what he amounts to."

The old woman broke through the crowd, through the cordon of soldiers. More soldiers ran up to seize her, grappling with her, but my Uncle Miah motioned. He stopped the hearse. The old woman sobbed at the window. Then my Uncle Miah mumbled to her, and we went on. She stood there trembling, wilted, fumbling with her hands in the folds of the shawl.

"There'll be doughnuts," my Uncle Miah called back to her, "and coffee. Bring Tim and the children. And wait for me there."

"I'd like to see the major," I said.

"I've no time for majors. If anyone calls, you can say that I'm down at Keith's Casino at the Hurly Girly Parisienne Revue. I'll be out backstage, and you'll find me playing a slow game of chess with the girls of the chorus."

"I never saw him," I said.

"You'd be dismayed. Like the time a week ago, maybe more, he came to see me. His voice had a whine, and he was all wobbly from drink, from the drink of three weeks that was in him. First, you must know, he was a company stool, and he still is. That's why they made him the loyal legion's vice commander. He was the vicest one they could find. And then they made him a major.

" 'Jeremiah,' he says to me that day, 'I'm going to put an end to myself, and I don't want anybody but you to direct my funeral. I'm going down to the Saugatuck River and throw myself in.'

" 'It's a great pity,' says I, 'such a fine handsome river.'

" 'I'm going to jump in the river and end it all; I'm no good to myself, and I'm no

For Fun

It was long before the national performance,
preparing for heroes,
carnival-time, time of
political decorations and the tearing of treaties.
Long before the prophecies came true.
For cities also play their brilliant lives.
They have their nightmares. They have their nights of peace.
Senility, wisecracks, tomb, tomb.

Bunting, plaster of Paris whores, electrified unicorns.
Pyramids of mirrors and the winking sphinx,
flower mosaics on the floors of stores,
ballets of massacres. Cut-glass sewers,
red velvet hangings stained the walls of jails,
white lacquer chairs at the abortionists',
boxers, mummies for policemen, wigs
on the meat at the butchers', murderers
eating their last meal under the Arch of Peace.

The unemployed brought all the orange trees,
cypress trees, tubbed rubber-plants, and limes,
conifers, loblolly and the tamaracks,
incongruous flowers to a grove wherein
they sat, making oranges out of excelsior
and colored crepe paper. For in that cold season
fruit was golden could not be guaranteed.

It was long before the riderless horse came streaming
hot to the Square. I walked at noon and saw
that face run screaming through the crowd saying Help
but its mouth would not open and they could not hear.

It was long before the troops entered the city
that I looked up and saw the Floating Man.
Explain yourself I cried at the last. I am,
the angel waste, your need which is your guilt,
answered, affliction and a fascist death.

It was long before the city was bombed I saw
fireworks, mirrors, gilt, consumed in flame,
we show this you said the flames, speak it speak it
but I was employed then making straw oranges.
Everything spoke: flames, city, glass, but I
had heavy mystery thrown against the heart.

It was long before the fall of the city.
Ten days before the appearance of the skull.
Five days until the skull showed clean,
and now the entry is prepared.
Carnival's ready.
Let's dance a little before we go home to hell.

MURIEL RUKEYSER.

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good at all to anyone else on this earth or in heaven,' he says to me, and he was right. For once in his life, he told the truth.

" 'I want to make certain, Jeremiah, that you have the funeral, when they find me, and I want you to see to it that my body is cremated,' says he.

"We talked a bit of terms, one thing and another, and I showed him an urn in the catalogue—604, I remember; 604B, if he wanted all the scroll work. So I showed him this urn that would hold the all of him when the roaring of the fires would be still. And you never saw a man so pleased. He drooled, he was that happy.

" 'Jeremiah,' he says to me, 'you're a great friend. It's a lucky day for me I happened to drop in here, just for the sympathy you've given me in my last hour of need. You'll get your money in advance. You'll hear from me again,' says he, 'before Tuesday is a week,' and with that he was gone, staggering out the door with all his majorly spasms. And after all that, and me placing my trust in the man, you wouldn't believe the lying, deceitful, majorly thing he'd do."

"What did he do, Uncle Miah?"

"Nothing! Nothing at all did he do. I waited and waited, all the time burning the chalice lights, but no word ever came from the river. And from that day to this, thanks be to me, I never laid eyes on the man. Not till today, this morning early."

"You saw him this morning?"

"I was out in the casket display room, all by myself, primping up things. Not gilded, but fine all the same; the likes you'd never find equaled in all the fancy suites at the Copley-Plaza Hotel.

" 'Jeremiah,' he says to me today, 'I have here the route mapped out for the funeral line. It's all mapped out, the route you'll take.'

" 'From glen to glen,' says I, 'and down the mountainside.'

" 'Go this way, go that way,' he says to me, 'but never go near the Putnam bridge.'

"I looked at him, And him with his spangles, his belts, and his buckles, and a slanty tin hat of a helmet perched on his head.

" 'With no word from you,' I says to him, 'for thirty-one years I've been finding my way to the Mount of Good Hope. It's the horse knows the way to carry the sleigh, and hurrah,' says I, 'for the pumpkin pie.' "

We stopped. On the slope, the long approach to the Putnam bridge. Old Father Hinnery, breathless, pranced in the center lane. Far back a siren screamed. Father Hinnery flourished the twisted walking-stick above his head; he waved to us, to the crowd. The crowd, on both sides of the lane, strained at the soldiers' lines.

The siren faltered, choked; a motorcycle and sidecar stopped and the major clambered out. He jostled his way to the side of the hearse.

"Jeremiah," the major said, "you've had your orders. This is a closed, restricted zone, and I tell you, you've no business butting in."

"It's a damned poor zone," my Uncle Miah said to him.

"We're trying to break this thing up, Jeremiah," the major said, "and the least little demonstration would wreck us, all of us. I've told you once, and I'm telling you now for the last time. This bridge is closed. You're in a military zone."

"It's a damned poor zone that would tolerate the likes of you," my Uncle Miah said.

The major stooped at the open window. My Uncle Miah growled; he snatched at the brim of the major's helmet. He jammed the helmet over the major's eyes, his nose. He chopped at the helmet with doubled-up fist, pounding the tilted dome. The major staggered, blinded; no sound, no cry, and then the weave-room men smashed through the soldiers' lines, swarming, surrounding all, the major, the soldiers who struggled to help him unmask. The hearse went forward.

Old Father Hinnery, out in front, waved his stick and cleared the way. On the bridge the weave-room men formed cordons, supplanting the soldiers. We went slowly, moving at walking pace. Old Father Hinnery dropped back to walk beside the hearse. And then my Uncle Miah nudged me; he mumbled.

"Tip your hat to His Reverence," he said.

I grabbed at my cap. I held it, crunching it, in my lap. Father Hinnery looked at me. He looked away, then turned again to stare.

"Connie Mack is in Boston today with his sad Philadelphia A's. Did anyone tell you?"

"Yes, Father," I said.

"I must tell him, the next time I see him, the thought I have," Father Hinnery said. "He's always down in last place in the league, poor man, so let his team be known henceforth as the Z's instead of the A's."

"That way," my Uncle Miah said, "we'd know where we stood. There'd be no deception."

Father Hinnery ran on, ahead of the hearse. The crowd, overflowing, surged at the head of the bridge. Father Hinnery shouted; he gestured, breaking a path through the crowd, through makeshift signs, banners.

"Let you all join in at the rear of the line," he yelled. "All the way, the full length of New Salem Street."

The pallbearers' car, slowing, stopped at his side; hands stretched out to beckon, to grasp his arm, and Father Hinnery got in. We went on. We crossed the bridge.

"Do you think of the man we're riding with?" my Uncle Miah said to me.

I nodded. My cap, with all the buttons, the ribbons. I put it on. I looked out at the silent line, marching, following Allie McKeenan.

"Not one man alone," my Uncle Miah said, "but two by two and two more two's times twice ten thousand. We're keeping the faith with the man we're riding with."

"Maybe we lost the major," I said. "I wish he had kept his word. And jumped in the river."

"Maybe he tried," my Uncle Miah said, "and maybe he wasn't wanted. The river, sometimes, can be honest and clean. And all the time proud. Maybe the river took one good look at the major and knew him for all the lying, deceitful majorly ways he has. And maybe the river refused to accept him."

EDWARD WALL.

Rhetorical Mathematics

THE following correcting letter, printed in the New York *Herald Tribune,* August 18, together with its editorial apology, is one of those things that weaken reader confidence in the capitalist press. Perhaps what is wrong with our bankers is that they use figures, as Mr. Bache does, in a rhetorical, rather than mathematical manner.

To the New York *Herald Tribune:* I have read with some surprise the statement by Mr. Jules S. Bache on the question of governmental debts, made in an interview with the press on his arrival from Europe, in which he is quoted as saying: "Let's stop talking about them [war debts]. England doesn't owe us money, she owes us steel, which we sold her at $285 a ton. We don't want that steel back."

As chairman, during the war, of the committee on steel distribution for the steel industry, in cooperation with the War Industries Board, I recall the prices charged the Allied governments for orders placed with the United States mills were approximately as follows:

Shell steel bars	$63 a ton
Plates and shapes	$59 a ton
Ordinary bars	$53 a ton
Forging billets up to	$80 a ton

The above covered upward of 70 percent of the tonnage sold; special qualities for ordnance purposes were relative according to specification. At that time the American industry was paying Great Britain $1,400 a ton for pig tin from the Straits Settlements and $400 to $500 a ton for ferromanganese produced from East Indian ores.

If Mr. Bache is correctly reported, it is regrettable that the public should be led astray on a question of such importance by any exaggerated statement as to the prices charged the Allies for steel. I feel that it is incumbent upon Mr. Bache to justify his statement that "we sold her [England] steel at $285 a ton."

JAMES A. FARRELL.

[We understand from Mr. Bache that in using the figure of $285 he was momentarily confusing steel prices with other statistics. The figure was used only in a rhetorical sense.—Ed., *Herald Tribune.*]

They Help Hearst

THE following twelve national advertisers are continuing to advertise in Hearst's Chicago *Herald-American* (the paper formed by the recent merger of the two Hearst papers, the *Evening American* and *Herald & Examiner),* where the Newspaper Guild has been waging a successful strike. These firms are: Sears, Roebuck & Co., Walgreen Drug Stores, Pepsodent, Eastman Kodak, A&P Food Stores, National Tea Co., National Distillers Products, Standard Oil, Sinclair Oil, Camel, Chesterfield, and Old Gold cigarettes.

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ILA on the Mississippi

The heroic struggles of Thomas Albert Watkinz, levee labor leader of Memphis, against the shipowners' goons.

THIS is the story of Thomas Albert Watkinz, Negro longshoremen's union leader of Memphis, Tenn. It is related just as Watkinz himself told it to me a few days after the incident described below occurred.

Watkinz is a broad-shouldered, powerful young man with a pleasant, flashy smile. But he is the sort whom certain members of the Southern aristocracy would describe as a "bad nigger." That is, in spite of his Arkansas origin, he doesn't "know his place," and won't take orders from the powers that be as far as his union is concerned.

Watkinz, whose name is the result of a grandparent's ignorance of spelling, has been through five waterfront strikes in Memphis and "won 'em all." Most recent was the strike of 3,500 dock and barge workers up and down the river, who work for the Federal Barge Line, a semi-governmental outfit under the supervision of the War Department.

From Memphis up the Mississippi and its tributaries these dock workers belong to the AFL International Longshoremen's Association. Below Memphis they are in the Inland Boatmen's Division of the CIO Maritime Union. But they know that joint action means a lot when it comes to protecting their bread and butter, and they are united, along with other river transport unions, in the General River Workers Council. So they struck as one body for higher wages and preferential hiring. They won the dissolution of a company union and preferential hiring; wage increases waited upon the transfer of the Barge Lines from the War to the Commerce Department.

In Memphis Watkinz is the acknowledged leader of the Negro waterfront workers. He holds office in three locals, being president of ILA Local 1490. When the barge strike occurred, his local struck solidly. The ILA local of white workers also went out, then took a vote and returned to work. But Local 1490 held tight, and the strike was won within three weeks.

Watkinz hadn't been getting along any too well with the white "labor leaders" in Memphis even before that. Some of them had tried to tell him that he should "do as he was told," and he had told them that as long as he was president of Local 1490, and as long as it paid its money into the local AFL Council, he would take orders only from the union's membership. After that they raised the per capita tax paid to the Central Trades and Labor Council by the various unions to 25 cents per month. Since the Negro unions were not allowed to send delegates to the Central Council, Local 1490 began to wonder whether affiliation was worth this price. Watkinz protested the increase to William Green, but succeeded only in getting into an altercation with one of the white labor leaders, after which Local 1490 was expelled from the Council.

But it was the riverfront employers who hated the Negro labor leader most bitterly. At 2 a.m. on Friday, May 26, the police paid Watkinz a visit at his home. He had been arrested many times before; once he had even been arraigned before a grand jury, only to have them return "no bill." But this time it was different. He was handcuffed, and he and his wife were put into a car and driven away by three policemen. He recognized them all, he said. Nothing was said about jail. One of the policemen told Watkinz that some people wanted to have a look at him. They drove him into an old warehouse built out over the river. Here three other men were waiting. They were also positively identified by Watkinz; they were officials of one of the largest privately owned shipping companies in Memphis.

Shortly before this kidnaping, some barges had allegedly broken loose from their moorings on the riverfront. No one had seen them except the barge company, according to Watkinz; whether they had broken loose in the spring high water or whether it was all just an excuse for an attack on the Negro union leader is uncertain. "I guess they jes' didn't want me around there no more," Watkinz remarked with a broad smile. The men tied Watkinz' wife at the other end of the dock and began to question Watkinz about the barges. He denied all knowledge of what had happened to them. "As if we didn't have trouble enough without goin' out of our way to make more troubles for ourselves," he said in telling the story.

Now the six men closed in on the Negro. One of them took a heavy wooden "jack" or club and struck him on the back of the head, cutting his scalp to the bone through two thicknesses of his folded longshoremen's felt hat. "Hit me so hard my chin went down and hurt my chest," he said, "and my arms flew up and the manacles on my wrists hit me in the face. I guess if it hadn't been for that ol' hat—it was a good hat, it was a $10 hat one time—that blow might have knocked me out long enough so they coulda thrown me in the river and that woulda been the end o' Thomas Watkinz." (A doctor examining the head wound afterward expressed amazement that Watkinz could have survived such a blow.)

The dazed Negro staggered forward, his head pressed on his chest, but he did not lose consciousness. One man had a rope with an iron weight tied on it slung over his arm. He heard one of the group, a police official, tell one of the transport company officials—Watkinz named both of them—to tie his legs and weight him down and drop him into sixty feet of water off the warehouse dock. This aroused him, and he snapped forward, picked up one of his attackers bodily in his manacled hands, and threw him to the floor. While the attention of the others was distracted by this sudden act, Watkinz broke through their line and ran through the open door of the warehouse. Then the men began to shoot. Altogether, twenty-five or thirty shots were fired after him, he said. He jumped from the dock to a barge tied alongside, then to a second barge. When he leaped to the third barge in the row in his desperate race for shore, he struck his handcuffs against the side, and one of them snapped open, making his flight easier. (When he was interviewed, raw sores were still in evidence on Watkinz' wrists where the steel had cut his flesh when he was escaping.)

His captors probably expected Watkinz to get out of town as quickly as possible. They spread the story that he jumped from the automobile, leaped to the barges, and swam across the river to Arkansas. "Ever'body knows I can't swim so my friends didn't believe that," he said. "I ran right to the union headquarters, got an ol' shotgun and sat there waitin' for 'em to come." He sent some of his union brothers for the representative of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Memphis. The federal man arrived, and heard the whole story. A representative of the police also came, and unlocked the handcuff that was still fastened.

Then, and only then, the longshoreman leader left Memphis, in order to avoid further violence. He took his wife North with him. "She's been tryin' to get me to quit this union business for the last four years. She don' like it," he said. "But I won't quit."

There the story stands. Whether Watkinz will be able to return to Memphis and the union of which he is president, and whether Negro unions will dare to function in Memphis from now on, depend on what the FBI and the Civil Liberties Division of the Department of Justice do about the case. Watkinz and his friends hope that action will be taken to end such terrorism. Years of courageous work in building trade unionism in the South under great difficulties may be wasted if incidents such as this are allowed to go unchallenged.

COLE STEVENS.

Gestapo Hot Money

LAST winter, a certain Joseph Kelly walked into a Manchester, England, bank to cash a 20-pound note. Mr. Kelly was arrested and held for trial when authorities discovered that the note was part of a shipment from London to the Deutsche Bank in Berlin. The Kelly trial disclosed he had recently come from Cologne. There was enough dynamite in the revelations to force the expulsion of the Nazi consul from Liverpool. About the same time, a group of Syrian terrorists held by French authorities were found to possess a large quantity of 20-pound bank notes. Upon investigation, the British consul at Damascus found them to be part of a recent consignment to a bank in Berlin.

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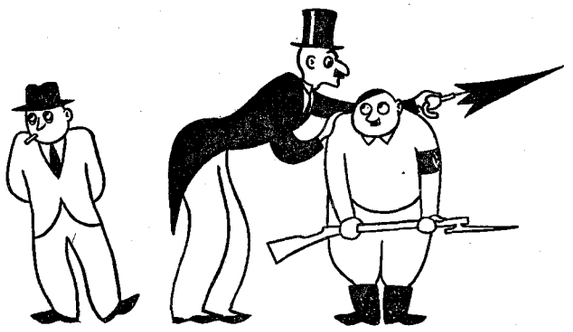

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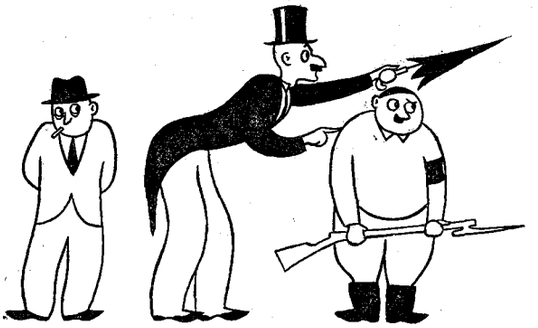

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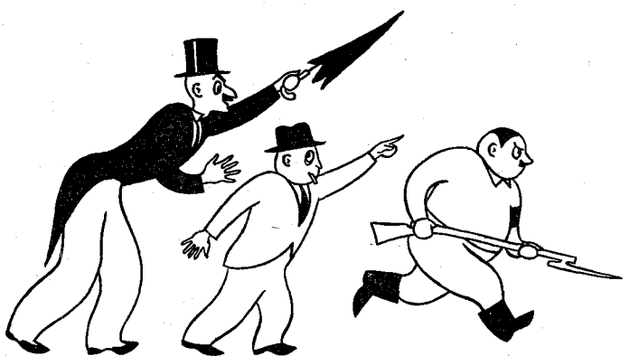

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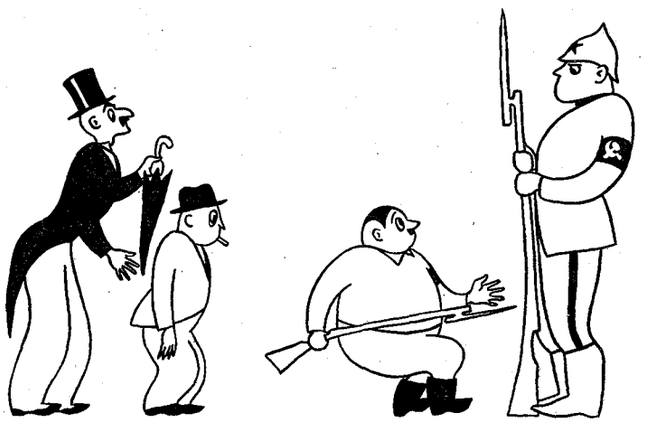

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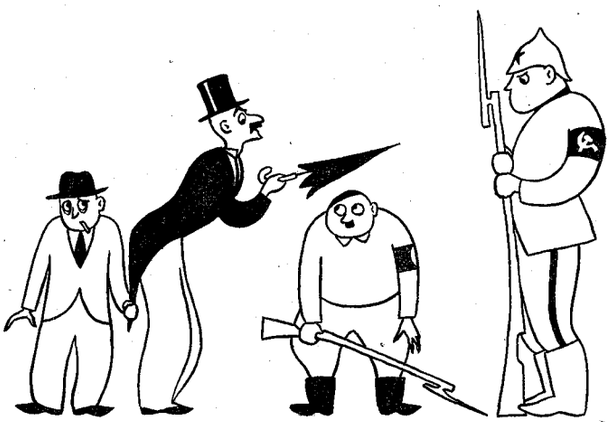

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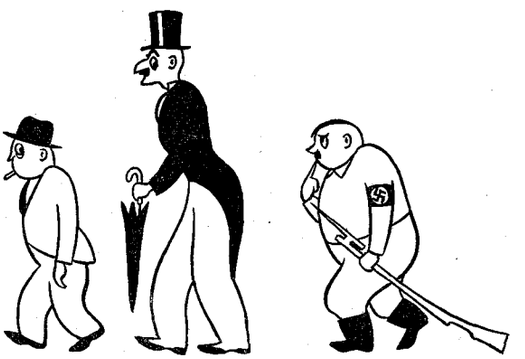

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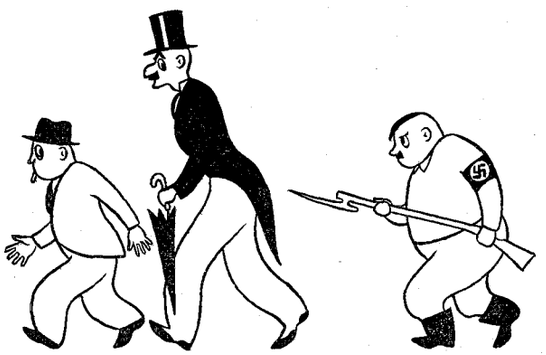

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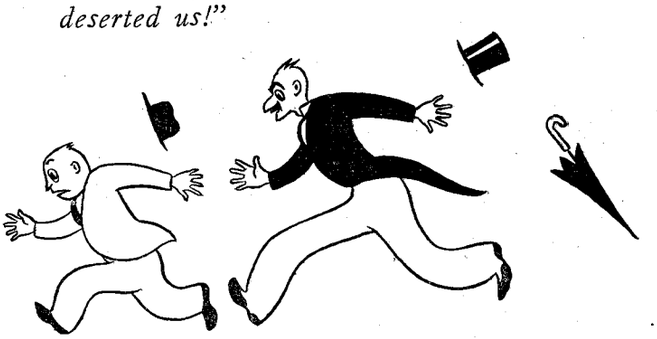
"That dirty Russian deserted us!"



Crockett Johnson

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Hitler on the Spot

AS WE go to press Hitler appears to have fumbled the ball and seems destined to be thrown for a loss unless Chamberlain and his fellow Munichites come to his aid. For months Hitler has been building up to this crisis, duplicating in almost every detail the technique that proved so fatal to Czechoslovakia. There were the well known threats and atrocity stories, the attempts to create internal disorder in Poland, the border "incidents," the raucous "encirclement" propaganda, and the calculated crescendo of tension bursting into the final hysterical "war crisis." Meeting unexpected resistance, however, Hitler in desperation hastened to accept the Soviet Union's proposals for a non-aggression pact, hoping to exploit this demagogically for a coup that would crumple all opposition.

It is now evident that the quick knockout blow which Hitler counted on has not come off. The Soviet pact proved a boomerang, lost him Japan, scotched the appeasement tactics of Chamberlain and Bonnet, and far from gaining Hitler Soviet collaboration or "neutrality," served to isolate him from his partners in fascist brigandage. Thursday the press reported that 6 p.m. had been set as the deadline for the German army to march. Friday Hitler's puppet, Albert Forster, was declared the supreme head of the state of Danzig as a preliminary to what was announced as the imminent incorporation of the Free City in the Reich. Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc., the German army had still not marched, Danzig was still not incorporated in the Reich, but Hitler was doing a great deal of frantic letter-writing and ambassadors and secret emissaries were scurrying back and forth between Berlin, London, and Paris. And meanwhile little Yugoslavia, which was supposed to be firmly hooked on the fascist axis, has taken advantage of the situation to effect a settlement of the long-standing controversy between the Serbs and Croats and to take the first steps toward the restoration of democratic government.

In all this panic-mongering the attitude of Italy has been highly significant. With the world supposedly teetering on the brink of war, Germany's military ally hasn't even bothered to mobilize. Only two new classes have been called and they are not to report until September 3. No troops have been moved, no special precautions taken. Apparently Mussolini knows better than to accept the war talk at face value. What he is counting on—and Hitler—is a second Munich.

Despite the strong words emanating from London and Paris, the danger of this second Munich is real so long as those who engineered the first remain in control of the British and French governments. True, an aroused public opinion has made the difficulties in the way of a new betrayal vastly greater than they were last September, but behind the scenes the Munichites are feverishly at work. Sonia Tamara, in a Warsaw dispatch to the New York *Herald Tribune,* reports that the British and French ambassadors visited Foreign Minister Josef Beck in an effort to induce him to "compromise." She writes, however, that the Polish people have not forgotten Czechoslovakia. "They do not trust the British prime minister, and it is frequently heard here that Poland's main enemy is not Hitler, but Neville Chamberlain." Trust the common people to smell a rat, even an umbrella-bearing one.

Bolivia and Chile

EUROPEAN events have their ramifications and their parallels throughout the world. Last week, for instance, South America saw examples of both. In Bolivia the fascist leader died, perhaps, as the press reports said, by his own hand, perhaps the other way. In Chile a fascist, Franco-like revolt was put down by the Popular Front Chilean government and thousands of working class volunteers.

On August 26 the papers carried the report of the death by suicide of German Busch, youthful Bolivian general who had made his fame in the Chaco war and became president in an army coup that made Bolivia fascist. Few details of the surrounding circumstances were given, but the current issue of the *Week* (London) suggests some interesting possibilities. While Busch was still alive, the *Week* wrote:

> German Busch, new dictator of Bolivia, is not merely the son of a Nazi-sympathizing German, but is himself ardently pro-Nazi, in the sense that he was financed by the German government in his seizure of power, and is at this moment entirely financially dependent upon the German and Japanese governments. (His feeble efforts to play one off against the other are getting him nowhere.)
>
> It is now confirmed that even before his assumption of power Busch had signed, with his German backers, an agreement under which Germany would take the vastly greater part of the Bolivian tin export, in exchange for supplies to Bolivia of—above all—military material, including airplanes.
>
> But the Bolivian tin export has been in the past mainly to the British smelter, so that there is the possibility that the whole lot will shortly be diverted to German smelters, with the result that the British smelter is badly handicapped.

And in the *Mining Journal* appeared this note:

> Latest developments in the Bolivian situation are: discussions of President Busch's father, Dr. Busch, with German political leaders, including Herr Faupel of the Berlin Ibero-American Institute, who had been nominated Bolivian research officer in the German Ministry of Economics; the foundation of a Japanese-Bolivian trading company with a capital of 2,000,000 yen; and a trip to Bolivia by a Japanese commission of mining engineers and geologists headed by Professor Tokonhami.

Being surrounded by Hitler, Chamberlain, and the Japanese last week was not an enviable position for any man. It was enough to drive Busch to suicide, but there are other angles. Chamberlain and Japan had reason to be angry with the Bolivian fascist. And, after all, the suicide story came only from Bolivia's Ministry of Propaganda, whose frequent business it is to charge death to the dead.

The Chilean affair was simpler. In Tacna, a northern province, a disgruntled general, Ariosto Herrera, led three army regiments in revolt. President Aguirre Cerda learned of it, called on the rest of the army and whatever workers were yearning for a thrust at fascism. The response was tremendous. The majority of the army remained loyal; the workers came out. Herrera was fleeing in a few hours. Who says the Popular Front is dead?

Texas Tammanyites

MAURY MAVERICK is a source of embarrassment and great consternation to John Nance Garner. A Texas Democrat and a consistent New Dealer, Maverick's existence, to say nothing of his political success, is proof to millions that not all of Texas stands behind the sort of thing that Garner has to offer. Maury Maverick is the only Texan who rivals Garner in press clippings and public prominence.

Garner's machine was able to keep Maverick from being returned to Congress last year, but it was unable to defeat him in the San Antonio mayoralty race. And so it was hatred of Maverick and the New Deal as much as anything else that led the Texas Tammanyites to incite a mob against a meeting called by the Communists in San Antonio last Friday night. It was not the Communists or Emma Tenayuca Brooks, the Texas woman who organized the pecan shellers and became known as the La Pasionaria of the South, that the reactionaries feared, but the action of Mayor Maverick in standing by the elementary civil liberties. Maverick granted permission for the meeting and assured police protection. Thousands charged the meeting of one hundred; many were hurt; one bystanding news photographer is being treated in a San Antonio hospital for serious injuries.

The Communist Party of Texas, properly enough, is reporting to U. S. Attorney Gen-

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eral Murphy and asking that immediate action be taken. The violation of civil rights is obvious; unlike that in Jersey City it had not official sanction, but was carried out by hoodlums acting under the leadership of the friends of Mr. Garner.

Moral Munich

MR. FRANK BUCHMAN, God's gauleiter for California and Cliveden, has made a pronouncement on the situation in Europe. The leader of Moral Rearmament tells us we can clear things up by being unselfish, and the good dominie undoubtedly means labor and the Soviet Union. Clearly Mr. Chamberlain has proved his unselfishness in the matter of Czechoslovakia, and Hitler has altruistically chopped his Polish demands down to Danzig and Pomorze, so it's about time the workers took a good stiff 50 percent cut to make it unanimous.

Dr. Buchman and his troupe of decayed Col. Blimps and Ack Emmas, have been the biggest sensation in Hollywood since Prince Mike Romanov. Executives have been morally rearming themselves so fast Hollywood citizens have taken to wearing moral gasmasks. Brotherly love is in the very air and Buchman has virtually supplanted the yellow dog contract in labor negotiation. We fear, however, that Dr. Buchman has taken a viper to his bosom in his zeal for converts. He has ventured into Mae West's boudoir, and has been photographed standing at her side looking like the countryman who got into the wrong house in the big city. Miss West has been quoted favorably on Moral Rearmament and has put W. C. Fields' name up for consideration. Nothing could be worse for Moral Rearmament; it will take Bunny Austin's fiercest chop stroke to defend Dr. Buchman's ranks from these creatures of Beelzebub. Luckily for MRA, Bill Fields balked at Satan's orders and declared himself unreconstructable. Dutch courage is still better than Moral Rearmament, thinks he, and with his sensible dialectic we must concur.

Manhattan's School Budget

PUBLIC alertness can still prevent any crippling reduction in the services of the New York City school system. No new budget has yet been adopted by the Board of Education since the court decision which outlawed the elimination of evening elementary and high schools, and while the legal status of the previously adopted budget is open to doubt, at least these services have been retained.

Credit must go to Mrs. Johanna Lindloff, progressive member of the Board of Education, for her insistence that the fall services must not be voluntarily curtailed by the action of the city, but rather that the city should go ahead with its full program as planned, and put up an unremitting struggle at the next session of the State Legislature for restoration of the cuts. That will put the onus for any curtailment squarely where it belongs—on the tory legislators of both parties at Albany.

It is unfortunate that Comptroller Joseph McGoldrick, competent administrator that he is, does not have an equally sound approach to the similar problem involved in New York City's capital outlay budget. The progressive LaGuardia administration, with a fine record of building necessary schools, hospitals, playgrounds, etc., today finds an arbitrary state restriction on the right of the city to borrow money standing in the way of carrying out a necessary building program. Instead of determining what the actual needs of the people are, working out a capital outlay program to meet those needs, and helping to mobilize a fight to remove arbitrary state restrictions, McGoldrick is passively accepting the restrictions as something fixed and eternal, and is attempting to cramp the needs of the people into what is financially possible under these limitations.

In both these instances, public attention must be centered on the city authorities—not with the object of embarrassing the progressive city administration, but to aid and encourage the city in rallying statewide public support against the tory Republicans who are responsible for the city's very real dilemma.

Teachers Convention

THROUGHOUT the year we have repeatedly called attention to the concerted attack on the educational system of many American communities. The drastic budget cut in New York was a dramatic symptom of a nationwide crusade by reaction against the schools. This ominous challenge was not ignored by the national convention of the American Federation of Teachers, held in Buffalo last week. The convention adopted a vigorous and progressive platform which called for the restoration and extension of educational facilities. The teachers indicated their solid support for the continuation of New Deal progressive policies, particularly the Wagner Health Bill, the WPA, and the National Labor Relations Act. A realistic understanding of the issues involved in the 1940 elections was displayed by the delegates. To carry out its decision to organize teachers in defense of their interests, which coincide with the interests of the American people as a whole, the convention elected a progressive slate for the Executive Committee. The address of Prof. George Counts, the new president, furnishes a basis for building the numbers and unity of the union. There are difficult days ahead for education, and the Buffalo convention indicated that the teachers will meet these days with courage, realism, and a sense of solidarity.

Twenty Fruitful Years

IN THE midst of wars and rumors of wars, NEW MASSES is especially pleased to extend birthday greetings to the Communist Party of the USA, which is twenty years old on September 1.

The Communist Party was formed out of a split in the Socialist Party, precipitated largely by the attitude of the party's dominant leaders toward the war and the Russian Revolution. It is not generally realized that in this dispute the left-wing forces had the support of a majority of the members and that it was the anti-democratic right-wing leadership of the Socialist Party which forced the split by wholesale expulsions and other repressive measures.

Much has gone over the dam in America and the world since then. The Communist Party has made mistakes, but we believe it has been right more often than any other political organization in the country. It has grown from a small sectarian organization of a few thousand members to an influential political party of more than 75,000 (not counting thousands more in the Young Communist League), with a far wider circle of sympathizers. In contrast the Socialist Party, ridden with Trotskyism and drifting from one political blind-alley to another, has, under the leadership of Norman Thomas, been reduced to a national membership of only about two or three thousand, and these are hopelessly disunited.

We feel that in this critical hour American democracy needs the Communist Party more than ever. It needs it not only for what it can do today, but for its vision of socialism, the broader and deeper democracy of tomorrow. We know that our readers and friends join with us in wishing the Communist Party many happy returns of the day.

Rivera's Candidate

THE presidential elections in Mexico furnish additional evidence that fascism and Trotskyism are two faces of the same coin. The fascist candidate for the presidency is Gen. Juan Andreu Almazan. One of the wealthiest men in Mexico, Almazan has received the backing of British and American interests as well as the support of the Nazis. And well he might. For Almazan declares the need for a "racial" policy in Mexico. He condemns the progressive administration of Lazaro Cardenas as a "hydra strangling the republic."

This agent of imperialist interests is heartily despised by the Mexican labor movement, by the peasants, the intellectuals, and the rank and file of the army. Now the Mexican Trotskyites, running true to form, are energetically boosting Almazan. Diego Rivera, Trotsky's Mexican mouthpiece, has declared: "I am now backing Almazan." In the name of his "party," Rivera defends Almazan's fascist program as a boon to the Mexican people. It is significant that Rivera's statement was published in *El Excelsior*, the diehard reactionary daily of Mexico. All of which is neither new nor surprising. What it does serve to emphasize is that progressives cannot for one moment forget that the fight against fascism and the fight against Trotskyism are inseparable.

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Readers' Forum

Marx on Anti-Semitism

To New Masses: Vincent Sheean has written a brave and painful book—*Not Peace but a Sword*—about the six months in Europe before and after Munich. With so many dark facts to record, one ray of light can be added to his record. Mr. Sheean writes: "Karl Marx was born and brought up a Christian; he was, in fact, an anti-Semite." Marx was born a Jew; he was six years old when his father, and the family, became Protestants. He was not an anti-Semite. The idea that he was stems from a misunderstanding of some of his references. (See, for example, *Science & Society*, Vol. 1, No. 4, page 544, where one such reference is explained.)

Mr. Sheean closes his book with the sentence: "Upon the will and instinct of the proletariat reposes such hope as we are justified in retaining for the future progress of humanity through and beyond the conflict which now divides the world." So it is important that the attitude of Marx on anti-Semitism be clearly understood, because it was Marx and Engels who laid the foundations, theoretical and practical, for the successful outcome of the modern proletarian movement. Engels' letter to an unknown correspondent, April 19, 1890, makes their opposition to anti-Semitism explicit: "Anti-Semitism is the characteristic sign of a backward civilization. . . . Anti-Semitism, therefore, is nothing but the reaction of the medieval, decadent strata of society against modern society. . . ." This letter against anti-Semitism is too long to quote in full. It will be found in the *Selected Correspondence*. It makes clear, as always, that in respect to the future progress of humanity Marx and Engels were *anti* one thing, capitalism, its masters and stooges, and *pro* one thing, the working class and its allies.

Walter Lowenfels.

Philadelphia, Pa.

NM in the Libraries

To New Masses: I am enclosing herewith $1 for a twelve-week subscription to New Masses for the Salt Lake City Public Library. About six months ago, the Bill Haywood Branch of the Communist Party noticed that the library did not have New Masses on its racks. We immediately went to the librarian and asked her if she would accept a gift subscription to the magazine. She said that she could not accept it until she had taken it up with the Library Board. When we called on her again, she reported that the board had refused to accept our offer because New Masses is a "communist" magazine (they have several fascist magazines on their racks).

Our next step was to petition the Library Board to put New Masses in the library. We busily got signatures for about a month, until we had an impressive number, and presented them to Miss Sprague, the librarian. Our petition evidently had its effect (there were some very prominent names on it) because we recently received a letter from Miss Sprague saying that the Library Board had reconsidered and would accept our gift.

The campaign is not ended, however, because in her letter Miss Sprague said definitely that the magazine would not be on the open racks in a library cover, but would be under lock and key. Anyone who wants it, that is, anyone who knows it's there, can ask for it and sign a paper in order to read it. We hope, by telling people about it and by demanding the magazine so often, that we will annoy the librarians so much that they will be glad to leave it out on the racks.

Aside from the fact that the policy of the Library Board has been very narrow and undemocratic in refusing to allow New Masses on its racks, in my opinion and in the opinion of the branch, it has also been criminal in depriving the people of Salt Lake of the best magazine printed in the United States.

Josephine Clark.

Salt Lake City, Utah.

[This is by no means the first letter of its kind received here. Library boards, composed as they are of big business representatives, try constantly to suppress New Masses and other progressive periodicals. The sort of popular pressure Miss Clark describes, however, has more than once been effective in bringing the magazine to the library racks.—The Editors.]

Song to Madrid

To New Masses: The following poem was written by Angelina Gonzalez, age thirteen, whose home was once in Aragon in the old Spain. Today Angelina lives at the new children's colony just established by the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign at Ile de Re in France. Here, with two hundred other youngsters, Angelina leads a normal, healthy life again. She has been "adopted" by an American guardian who pays the $5 monthly which is necessary to provide for her maintenance at the colony.

The children at Ile de Re recently gave a party for the French residents and the people came from miles around, on foot, bicycle, and by automobile. A concert of songs and dances of all regions in Spain was the program of the day. The most touching moment of the festival came when Angelina recited this poem, which she herself had composed:

"Madrid, heart of my country,
Madrid, immortal city,
Madrid, example for all the world,
Madrid, my native city.
There I have left my parents,
My family, my friends,
There I have left my heart.
I live only on memories.
I have no house, or home,
No toys or clothes,
My songs are silenced.
I live only for Madrid.
Unknown strangers made war on us,
Speaking a language we did not understand.
For what did they come?
To plunder and kill.
You see that I am nearly crying,
I am far away from my mother,
But I am not alone.
No, here I have many mothers.
And when I return to Madrid,
And soon when we shall triumph,
And I shall live with my own people,
And I shall play with my friends,
I shall say softly to my mother,
Do not be jealous,
When I went away I left one mother,
But now I do not know how many mothers I have."

Trudy Whitman,
Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign.

New York City.

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Three Novels

Granville Hicks reviews "Christ in Concrete" by Pietro di Donato, "The Hospital" by Kenneth Fearing, and "Children of God" by Vardis Fisher.

CHILDREN OF GOD, *by Vardis Fisher. Harper & Bros. $3.*
THE HOSPITAL, *by Kenneth Fearing. Random House. $2.*
CHRIST IN CONCRETE, *by Pietro di Donato. Bobbs-Merrill Co. $2.50.*

AT THE opening of a new publishing season three novels seem noteworthy. Vardis Fisher's *Children of God* is a lively chronicle of the Mormons, interesting rather because of its material than because of any creative force on the author's part. Kenneth Fearing's first novel, less distinguished than his poetry, deals with a subject in which almost everyone is interested—sickness—and has its exciting moments. *Christ in Concrete,* a portion of which appeared in NEW MASSES, (April 18) gives us the measure of an unusual and hopeful talent. None of the three is first-rate, but all are worth reading.

CHILDREN OF GOD

Vardis Fisher tells the story of the Mormons from Joseph Smith's first revelation in 1820 to the virtual collapse of the movement seventy years later. In the first part Smith is the central figure, in the second Brigham Young, and in the third a family by the name of McBride. So completely objective a study seems pleasant after Mr. Fisher's autobiographical tetralogy, and there is no denying the fascination of the narrative. From many points of view, the rise of Mormonism is one of the most fabulous episodes in American history. In the whole pageant of human follies and superstitions, no more fantastic gospel was ever preached than Joseph Smith's. Compared with him, such a contemporary as John Humphrey Noyes seems a model of enlightenment and practicality. Yet Smith's preaching inspired thousands of people, sustaining them not only through martyrdom but also in a heroic and wholly magnificent constructive enterprise.

As one reads Mr. Fisher's book, one is divided between amazement at Mormon folly and admiration of Mormon courage. Towards the enemies of Mormonism, on the other hand, one feels only indignation and contempt. That Mormon doctrine could legitimately be opposed on rational grounds goes without saying, but there can be no defense of the persecution of the Mormon people. One reads the record of massacre, pillage, rape, of the perversion of justice and the misuse of civil authority, with a chastening kind of horror. It is the sort of thing that couldn't happen here—but it did. And it was all done with a hypocrisy so nauseous that one cringes as one reads of it.

PIETRO DI DONATO. *A bricklayer himself, he writes of immigrant bricklayers.*

KENNETH FEARING. *"The Hospital" is this well known poet's first novel.*

VARDIS FISHER. *His "Children of God" is a chronicle of the Mormons.*

It is good for us to know the story, and on that ground *Children of God* is worth reading. A big book, it moves swiftly, and so far as I know it is dependable. The reader, however, is likely to wonder why the Mormons behaved as they did and were persecuted as they were. On this score he will find the novel disappointing. In his essay on Vardis Fisher, published last year, David Rein commented on his reliance on psychological methods to explain social phenomena, and in the same little volume Mr. Fisher defended himself and expounded what he regards as the true psychology. Yet here, where psychological insight is surely called for, Mr. Fisher has little to offer. His treatment of Joseph Smith's visions is inept and evasive, and the whole question of conversion, which is central to the novel, is gingerly handled. Yet, bankrupt as the psychological approach proves, he remains true to his theories and pays no attention to similar movements of the period. I do not suggest that a study of social conditions in the twenties, thirties, and forties would immediately yield a satisfactory explanation of Mormonism, but a student, examining the whole wave of religious hysteria, might find some significant clues.

It is fair to ask Fisher for some more adequate treatment of Mormonism, for the emphasis all the way through falls on history rather than fiction. But even on literary grounds there is reason to demand a sharper understanding. There is not a single fully developed and wholly credible character in the book. The historical novelist today has a difficult task, for readers insist on accuracy, and his imagination is allowed to function only within the limits set up by documentary evidence. This means, in effect, that he can make characters live only if he thoroughly understands their role in history. That is why *Children of God* is no more than a competent retelling of noteworthy facts.

THE HOSPITAL

Mr. Fearing has been less ambitious, and done rather better. The idea has occurred to many authors of trying to show what was happening in a given place—a ship, say, or a hotel, or a city block—in a given period of time. The idea is tempting, for the arbitrary grouping of many people is characteristic of our age and symbolic of its complexity. And it is a perfectly good idea, no matter how many people have had it.

The Hospital describes what happens in less than an hour on a hot afternoon. A girl is being examined for tuberculosis, and another is being operated on for a tumor, which turns

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out to be malignant. The first girl's doctor has just learned that his father-in-law is penniless and perhaps insane. The second girl's doctor is staking his reputation as a surgeon. An ambulance doctor sees a victim of acid-throwing. A famous old surgeon is dying. Nurses, technicians, and washerwomen are going about their work. And an old timekeeper gets drunk, goes berserk, and cuts off the electric power in the whole hospital.

Mr. Fearing handles all this very well, skillfully solving the chief technical problem, which is that of time sequence, since many events happen simultaneously. He shows how people live apart even when they are together, and at the same time he shows how strangely their lives may be related. He remembers, furthermore, that the hospital is not a world by itself. Not only is each character influenced by what happens outside the walls; the institution itself—in its income, its management, its labor relations—is part of an economic system that is functioning rather badly.

The book's most impressive quality is knowledge. In a note Mr. Fearing thanks "the many doctors, nurses, technicians, maintenance workers, hospital and city executives" who have helped him. He can well say that the book could not have been written without their aid, for every page reflects what appears to be precise technical information. This information is not, of course, important in itself, though it is interesting. It is, however, essential to the success of the novel. The only way Mr. Fearing can get at these human beings is by showing exactly what they are experiencing. Lafcadio Hearn once said that a great novel could never be written about high finance, fascinating as the subject is, because no author knew enough. Today writers realize that they must acquire the information they need, and *The Hospital* shows that it can be done.

The novel does not compare in either originality or intensity with Mr. Fearing's poetry. One of the best of modern poets, he seems, in this his first novel, merely one of the better novelists. The book, however, is easy and exciting to read, and sound as far as it goes. Mr. Fearing may not have aimed very high, but he did score a bull's eye.

CHRIST IN CONCRETE

Both *Children of God* and *The Hospital* are uncommonly objective; *Christ in Concrete* is autobiographical and personal; yet it is concerned with the recreation of a world rather than the revelation of the author's soul. It is a story of Italian immigrants, bricklayers and their families. The first chapter, which received high and well deserved praise when it was published as a short story, describes the death of Geremio. His son, Paul, who is twelve, takes up the burden of supporting the family, and begins laying brick. The family struggles along, and he adjusts himself to his job. There are incidents in the lives of his associates—an injury, a marriage, a debauch, a death. And the book ends with Paul's disillusionment and the death of his mother.

Donato has a great talent for dramatic scenes, and in particular episodes the book is magnificent. As yet, however, he has not a comparable talent for the creation of character, and one remembers scenes, not people. The style is supposed to reflect the rhythms of spoken Italian, and perhaps it does. In any case Donato is on the way to creating a style of his own, but as yet he has not mastered it, too often relying on such devices as the omission of articles, the inversion of sentences, and the concocting of unusual word combinations. On the other hand, there are times when he picks the reader up and soars with him. He has, I think, a great gift, and some day he will know how to use it.

The fine thing is, of course, Donato's saturation in the life he describes. He brings to our literature the deepest, warmest, most intimate feeling for the essentials of proletarian life. He knows not only the job, with all its dangers, but also the home, with its joys as well as its worries. He is not afraid of sentiment, and he knows how to create color. If the novel is fragmentary and often overstrained, it is alive, and out of such vitality great fiction can come.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

Miss Dean's Dilemma

EUROPE IN RETREAT, *by Vera Micheles Dean. (Revised Edition.) Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.*

THIS volume gives you a structural understanding of post-war Europe, providing the background for the betrayal and dismemberment of Czechoslovakia last September. Its value is severely limited by an almost opaque attitude toward the Soviet Union. Miss Dean seems surprised that the Soviet constitution guarantees the rights of individual property. She regrets that "the unconventional mores which both shocked and delighted Western tourists have given way to copybook moralities . . . extolling family virtues and frowning on abortion and divorce."

She hesitates to appraise the Soviet Union "until history shall have judged whether socialism can be established without coercion," but perhaps that is best. For all her technical qualifications, Miss Dean lacks a fundamental perspective in treating of Marxism and socialism. In a book about Munich this may appear gratuitous, but the truth is that out of the fatal identification of fascism and Communism so prevalent among American liberals, there arises an inability to understand Munich fundamentally. For Munich was a stage in the undeclared imperialist war now raging between fascism and democracy, in which the generals among the democratic states sabotaged their own allies and prejudiced their own armies, preferring to conciliate the aggressor rather than force him to back down.

Perhaps the most annoying thing in the book is its manner. Superficially all problems are presented from all points of view. In itself this is well, for no phenomena can be understood except in their all-sidedness. But without a fundamental affirmation that arises to

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Miss Dean's trade, as the research director of the Foreign Policy Association, consists of gathering information. But Miss Dean's dilemma lies in her inability to suggest *action* on the basis of information. The result is a delicate muddle out of which we cull such rusty coins as "nor can those who either attack or defend the existing order be regarded as unmitigated villains"; or "no class or race or creed has a monopoly of virtue," or "not all capitalists are blood-sucking leeches, not all workers are generous and intelligent"—all of which leads to the pompous irrelevancy: "the only finality known to man is death." To which the reader who wishes to *live* in the post-Munich world will reply, "So what?"

JOSEPH STAROBIN.

Radio Drama

COLUMBIA WORKSHOP PLAYS, *selected and edited by Douglas Coulter. Whittlesey House. $2.75.*

ON THE air weekly since July 1936, the Columbia Workshop has pioneered intelligently and successfully in the field of radio drama. The fourteen scripts included in this volume illustrate the diversity of materials and range of experimentation opened up by this medium. The verse plays by Norman Corwin *(They Fly Through the Air)* and Archibald MacLeish *(The Fall of the City)*, both dealing with the horrors of aerial bombardment, are easily the most effective works in this collection. The Workshop has also stimulated the production of dramatized short stories. The adaptations of stories by Wilbur Daniel Steele, William March, and Stephen Vincent Benet are skillfully done, particularly Benet's humorous fantasy, "Daniel Webster and the Sea Serpent." Irving Reis' "Meridian 7-1212" and V. C. Knight's "Cartwheel" are interesting examples of the integration of sound and musical effects with dramatic narrative. The publication of these plays drives home the fact that radio writing has become an important part of the contemporary literary scene.

S. S.

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For the lords who lay you low?
Wherefore weave with toil and care
The rich robes your tyrants wear?

Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save,
From the cradle to the grave,
Those ungrateful drones who would
Drain your sweat—nay, drink your blood!

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge
Many a weapon, chain, and scourge,
That these stingless drones may spoil
The forced product of your toil?

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,
Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?
Or what is it ye buy so dear
With your pain and with your fear?

The seed ye sow, another reaps;
The wealth ye find, another keeps;
The robes ye weave, another wears;
The arms ye forge, another bears.

Sow seed—but let no tyrant reap;
Find wealth—but let no impostor heap;
Weave robes—let not the idle wear;
Forge arms—in your defense to bear. . . .

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POEMS *by Alvin Foote. The Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho. $1.50.*

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In this collection there is a complete absence of the kind of sentimental regionalism which too often bogs down the work of the suburban poet. Mr. Foote is interested mainly in the broader America, in "Those becomers and strong people,/anxious to discover answers." One might wish, however, that the author had exercised a more careful selection for the volume. Many of the poems lack the desired sharpness of image and diction: often there is little more than mere whimsical statement. Still, the variety of forms and writing substance are of sufficient interest to bring the balance decidedly in favor of Mr. Foote. At his best, his line is strong and original, as in his salute to that calm, distant future of mankind's hope, that era which will be a "Fortunate taker of no alms, no ridiculous bounty . . ."

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> Never to die without effort
> to erase and change.
> . . . Time we entrench at last,
> Attack from shallow ditch.

NORMAN ROSTEN.

First Novel

SCRATCH THE SURFACE, *by Edmund Schiddel. Harcourt, Brace & Co. $2.50.*

A FIRST novel by a young writer of the growing Cain-O'Hara style school. Schiddel, like his masters, writes at a terrific clip, except when he runs out of blood and thunder. The story deals with three "metropolitanites," allegedly typical of the young people who come from all over the country to work in New York's literary, advertising, theater, and radio world. *Scratch the Surface* has one unemployed ad man, one radio writer, one girl who works at interior decorating. The two men constantly wrangle over the girl, and she is thrown around through the novel like Danzig. Schiddel is at his best in describing the unemployed ad man's gradual demoralization. For the rest, it's snappy writing with little substance. R. H. R.

Book Notes

READERS of *The Grapes of Wrath* will be interested to know that three of John Steinbeck's earlier works are available in cheap reprint editions. Modern Library this week released *In Dubious Battle* (1936). *The Pastures of Heaven* (1932) has been reprinted by Modern Age, and *Tortilla Flat* (1935) by Modern Library. . . . The new Modern Library reprints, incidentally, have attractive hard-cover bindings. Others issued this week: *A New Anthology of Modern Poetry* and *The English Philosophers from Bacon to Mill*. . . .On the Modern Age fall list: *The Unknown Americas* by Josephine Herbst, *Hitler Is No Fool* by Karl Billinger, *You Might Like Socialism* by Corliss Lamont, *Light, Power and Plenty* by Jay Franklin, *The Mysterious Mickey Finn* by Elliot Paul, *Health in Handcuffs* by John A. Kingsbury. . . . Ludwig Renn's *Natural History of War* will be published in October by Oxford University Press. Renn served as a major during the war in Spain. Another outstanding fighter of the International Brigades, Gustav Regler, will publish a novel dealing with the brigades, *The Great Example*. Edwin Rolfe's and Alvah C. Bessie's forthcoming books will throw more light on the great struggles in Spain.

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Plays into Movies

Columbia makes a magnificent picture of Clifford Odets' "Golden Boy" and Bette Davis extends her reign in "The Old Maid" . . . Another Soviet historical film . . . Other screen reports.

AN INDIFFERENT play can be amplified and made into a better thing by the movies. I could work up no lather over the play *Golden Boy* or the published version of *The Old Maid,* yet both have become uncommonly good films, and Clifford Odets' play one of the two or three finest things of the screen season. The screen adaptation of the Group Theater original, written by Lewis Meltzer, Daniel Taradash, Sarah Y. Mason, and Victor Heerman, retains the rich genre content of the play even in the added scenes made possible by the mobility of the camera. I still think it's tosh to compare plays and their movie versions, because of the differing natures of plays and pictures and the fact that maybe 1 percent of your readers have seen both, but suffice it to say that the movie has a happy ending in keeping with the development of the idea and its added scenes are some of the best things about it.

The big news about this movie is the easy, understanding portraiture of the Bonaparte household—Italian, Jew, and whatnot—and of the real Negroes in the prize fight sequence. The producing ensemble has taken care to avoid the chauvinist tintypes and yet kept the cultural flavor of these Americans. When all the Bonapartes and their philosophical friend, Mr. Carp, gather at the piano to sing *Funiculi, Funicula* you see an everyday thing in America that the movies have often been too stupid to see; racism is not American. In the fight scenes, the best I've seen in the movies, the real people are stressed again in some remarkable candid snaps of the crowd watching Joe Bonaparte fight the Chocolate Drop. Commendably avoiding the shot in which the excited partisan crushes the hat on the head before him, the camera of Nick Musuraca and Karl Freund picks up the shouting Negroes, little glimpses of boredom, bewilderment, wild frenzy, and a wry shot of a blonde encircling her lips with paint as everyone about her stands roaring on his feet at a knockdown. The strength of the picture lies in this vigorous, selective observation of people, rather than in its moral problem of the violinist who had to fight to live.

Odets is fortunate in a cast as impressive as the Group one, excellent direction by Rouben Mamoulian, fine camera, and superior production values. William Holden, the new young man who plays Joe Bonaparte, is as good as his advance press. The task of making one Joe of the pushing fighter and the sensitive violinist is difficult but he has it in his grasp. Adolphe Menjou is Tom Moody, the fight manager, a wiseguy of the arnica set but a straightshooter with his friends; he has never been better cast. In a way Lee J. Cobb of the Group steals the screen with his Papa Bonaparte, performed with an eye on Morris Carnovsky's precedent but wealthy with his own ideas. In a field that has been dominated by Henry Armetta clowning, Mr. Cobb shows us a real Italian-American in a deeply touching performance. Sam Levene, whom I consider the greatest actor in the world when I'm watching him, plays Papa's son-in-law, Siggie, whose idea of heaven is a cab of his own and for whom civil liberty is complete when he has the exclusive right to beat his wife. Not that he will exercise his prerogative, because Siggie is just a big talker and beer drinker, one of Odets' best people. Beatrice Blinn (where in the world has she been before?) plays Siggie's affectionate Anna, an absolutely new kind of woman to the screen and a striking characterization. William H. Strauss is little Mr. Carp, the contemporary and friend of Papa, another fine bit. Unfortunately, Eddie Fuseli, as played by Joseph Cal-

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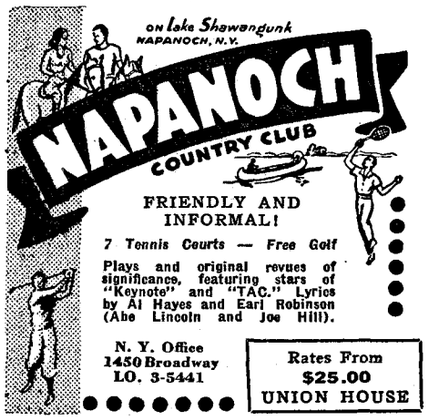

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leia, is but a sinister lithograph of a gangster and Barbara Stanwyck as Lorna Moon is ordinary. They are out of drawing in this fine gallery.

A great helping of the Odets dialogue is intact. Tom Moody shouts to a fighter who has ruined him by breaking a hand on the eve of a big fight. "You know what you do to me?" he screams. "You embarrass me!"

It is a big, serious picture, proving again that Hollywood can do it when all the heads and hearts are in it. Of course, Hollywood is forever trying to punch them over with technicolor, giant sets, the surefire gag, and the two million nut, but rarely do the studios bring off a thing as sober and true as this film. *Golden Boy* is a powerful, poetic tribute to the American people, all kinds of them, and will be a real pleasure to them.

CONQUESTS OF PETER THE GREAT

The second picture of Lenfilm's trilogy on Czar Peter I, *The Conquests of Peter the Great,* begins a decade after the point where the previous film left Peter. Now the crack Swedish army of Charles II has marched into Russia as far as Poltava, where Peter's new army waits. It is June 1709. The ensuing battle is seen in colossal perspective; the sick Swedish king rises from his litter to see his regiments of foot and horse charge powerfully into the Russian position; the invaders break the first Russian line; and then Peter leads a countercharge to win the battle, and raise Russia to a major place in modern Europe. After Poltava, the Baltic states were quick to make alliances with their mighty neighbor, while England, France, and Sweden formed a close alliance to balance the power. Russia was left in comparative peace for Peter to establish his merchant fleet at St. Petersburg, where the Swedes had been routed before in the battle of Neva.

Alexei, the mystical czarevitch, flees to Italy to find his use as a tool for the plots of the Western powers, in fact to become their agent in reaching the treasonable elements in Russia, all the people of ancient privilege who had been rudely shaken by Peter's campaign of Westernization. The czar smashes the plot and Alexei is doomed for treason by Peter's ministers. But Peter's newly founded merchantmen still have to wrest a seaway in the Baltic from the Swedish men-of-war, and the film ends on the great naval battle of 1721 in which eight Russian frigates defeated seventeen Swedish vessels while the English fleet stood prudently by without aiding either side.

This is the mere outline of Alexei Tolstoy's story, too spare to indicate the treasure of acting, directing, set-building, lighting, and vigorous naturalism it contains. Nikolai Simonov continues his gargantuan portrayal of Czar Peter, the man of Western enlightenment who bullied, backslapped, and exhorted murky Russia into a new era. Nikolai Cherkassov is again Alexei, the sniveling, religious crank who was the odd, serpent child of the czar. Cherkassov wears well his supremacy over all other screen character actors. M. Zharov as Peter's right-hand man, Menshikov, is another standout. This is the historical film in its truest sense, recreating the living past in fascinating realism, searching it for the lesson and the sense of direction that lie in history's events. That is not to say it is a cunning and vulgar historical parallel, immediately applicable to other events, but it has the rare virtue of making sense out of the period, not merely a costume drama.

The screen is so overcome by its narrow preoccupation with pleasure-giving that such a film as *The Conquests of Peter the Great* may seem dull. I have long since lost patience with the people who regard the screen as a popcorn package, but the woods are still full of them. So I will name a new category for this extraordinary type of historical film. I think you will have to agree that the Peter pictures bear no similarity to *The Wizard of Oz,* so they may as well have different generic descriptions. *Oz* is a movie; this is a historical documentary. All right, kids, run along to the movies.

BETTE ACTS ON

Bette Davis, with the imagination to take virtuoso roles, is appearing in a tense, feminine picture from Zoe Akin's play, *The Old Maid,* originally a novel by Edith Wharton, another film that overshadows its original. As an unmarried mother of the Civil War era who is forced into frustrated spinsterhood by Victorian conventions against acknowledging her child, Miss Davis grows old ungracefully, tightening up like a steel spring until you fear an explosion in all her latter scenes with Miriam Hopkins, who is the widowed sister providing a status for the child. The rapier play between the two is the conflict, and although Miss Davis loses her child she may well comfort herself with another Academy Award. The picture fairly smolders with malice and catty nuances; it has lengths of quiet-spoken dialogue and agile camera work to keep it visually on the move. The story proceeds from 1861 to the eighties, but the brawling time of Civil War and Reconstruction never intrudes upon the cloistered duel in Delia Lovell's house. Like another carefully done Davis vehicle of last year, *Jezebel,* it is a disturbing study of the manners and the domestic surfaces of an American period without questioning the historic tides outside the ivied doorposts. I thought the picture truly absorbing but somehow constantly irritating because the intensity is too close, the story crying to get outdoors, off to the Civil War, into something as important as the acting and the serious production. The Warner Bros. studio has a scholarly relish for these period pieces and the creative forces to make them genuinely critical but they have yet to loose them from narrow Victorian domestic drama into the great historical events of the period. I don't think a good picture can be laid in the sixties without the Civil War being its star.

THE FRENCH SEASON OPENS

The Fifty-fifth Street Playhouse opens the first can of French film for the autumn with *Song of the Streets,* which has waited four

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years for its American edition. It is a spotty film, with uneven continuity, but distinguished by a major theme, and music, acting, and photography of a high caliber. Jacques Lerande is a youth in a working class quarter of Paris whom unemployment has set free in the cobbled alleys with a gang of thieving kids, each a creature of the same contretemps. They rally in the cluttered labyrinth of old man Schlamp's junk shop, whose tipsy proprietor serves them as a fence. Jacques meets a girl at Schlamp's, wrests her from a rival gangster, and becomes the king of his juvenile halfworld. His good mother and hardworking brother can do nothing with him, until the police catch him in his first big robbery. The mother's graphic plea in court, picturing the slums and idleness that took Jacques from her, wins him mercy. But the unmerciful world waits outside still.

Victor Trivas' direction offers some scattered scenes of great excitement. Once, in a great gang fight at Schlamp's with two mobs of kids wrecking the place, a blind accordion player becomes panicky in the riot and walks slowly with the widelegged method of the blind, swinging his instrument in great arcs to make his way. As the neighborhood gathers at the doors to Schlamp's stable the blind man opens them and walks into the crowd slowly, still swinging his ruined accordion. Another sequence, as Jacques finds a momentary job laying brick, is built up by Hanns Eisler's score into a veritable ode to work. Mr. Eisler's music is magnificent. The acting of the children is all I have previously praised in French films.

SCAB MOVIE

The labor-baiting Paramount film, *Our Leading Citizen,* reported on in recent issues, is now being booked by the nation's theaters. The fight against this canard on organized labor is being led by Film Audiences for Democracy, which has requested the producers to make certain changes in the picture, since accommodating alterations are a common practice in Hollywood when powerful groups have been injured. No such changes have been made in the picture as released. Film Audiences for Democracy has therefore called upon all progressives to boycott the film, to publicize its clever union-busting demagogy, and particularly to request neighborhood exhibitors to cancel their showing of *Our Leading Citizen.* The film got poor trade-paper reviews and local managers will be only too glad to be given a reason for canceling. Even block-booking contracts contain cancellation clauses on a certain percentage of pictures every year. Help open the new movie season with the biggest flop of the year for *Our Leading Citizen.* Phone, write, or call in person on your local Paramount exhibitor with the protests of progressives in your community.

Paramount is the company that suppressed the newsreels of the Memorial Day Massacre until forced to release them by the La Follette committee; the making of this film will be remembered by labor. JAMES DUGAN.

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